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# HISTORY OF SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP



Compiled by John J. Wilson

September 1962

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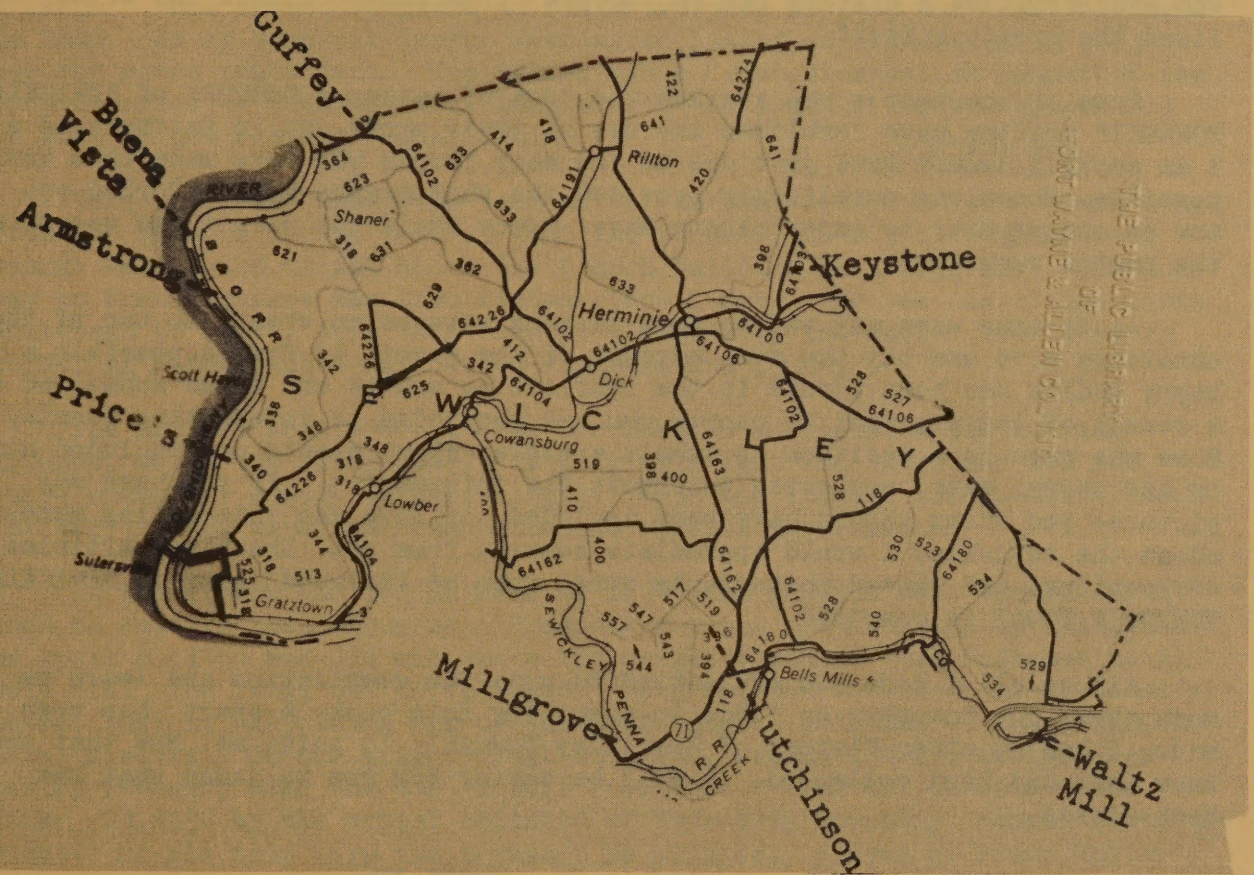






# 4628

HISTORY  
OF  
Twp.  
SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP Westmoreland Co. Pa.



Compiled by

John J. Wilson

September 1962



## JOHN J. WILSON



## JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

This collection of material submitted by many people of various walks of life has resulted in a HISTORY of SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP.

The sources of much of the material submitted is not known. Any one who ever compiled a history had to "borrow" from others unless the writer lived the events himself.

Some of the people who sparked the idea of having a HISTORY of SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP written have forbidden the use of their names. So in fairness to all, I am sorry I cannot give just due to the many people who have made this work possible. Those who unselfishly provided the photographs have afforded you now an opportunity to enjoy bygone days. Space would not permit the use of all the photos submitted.

As is true when any two or more persons witness an event: no two of the observers give exactly the same account of the event. As far as possible a happy median has been struck in the conflicting events and dates submitted as a result of letters sent to people who had knowledge of interesting events. Some who were in a position to submit articles about events not included here, or had useful data, neglected to submit the information. If you have any pictures you think should have been included, or have any interesting material about the township, I would appreciate hearing from you. These new articles, corrections, and unused photographs could then be included later if SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP TODAY is compiled.

All in all I hope you are satisfied with the compilation and learn as much about OUR township as I did in compiling this book. A start has been made. I had no other History of Sewickley Township to guide me. Now that you know what has been collected, it will be easier for you to judge what has been missed.

Thank you,

September 1962

John J. Wilson



## WESTMORELAND COUNTY

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was founded by William Penn, under a charter granted to him by King Charles II on March 4, 1681. William Penn was born in 1644 in London. He became a Quaker by joining the Society of Friends while a student at Oxford University. During the last half of the seventeenth century many of the English emigrants to America were Quakers. The deed from King Charles specifies: "A tract of land in America lying north of Maryland, on the east bounded by the Delaware river, on the west limited as Maryland is, and northward to extend as far as plantable." This part "on the west limited as Maryland is" caused Virginia to claim what is now Western Pennsylvania because it extended past what was Maryland.

The French claimed that the whole Ohio valley belonged to them and proceeded to enforce this claim by erecting a chain of forts from Canada to New Orleans. This caused Virginia to claim trespass on land they said belonged to them. So as a result George Washington headed an expedition in 1753 to see the exact conditions. The Pennsylvania Commissioners, on behalf of the proprietaries of Pennsylvania, bought from the Iroquois for 400 pounds all of what is now Western Pennsylvania.

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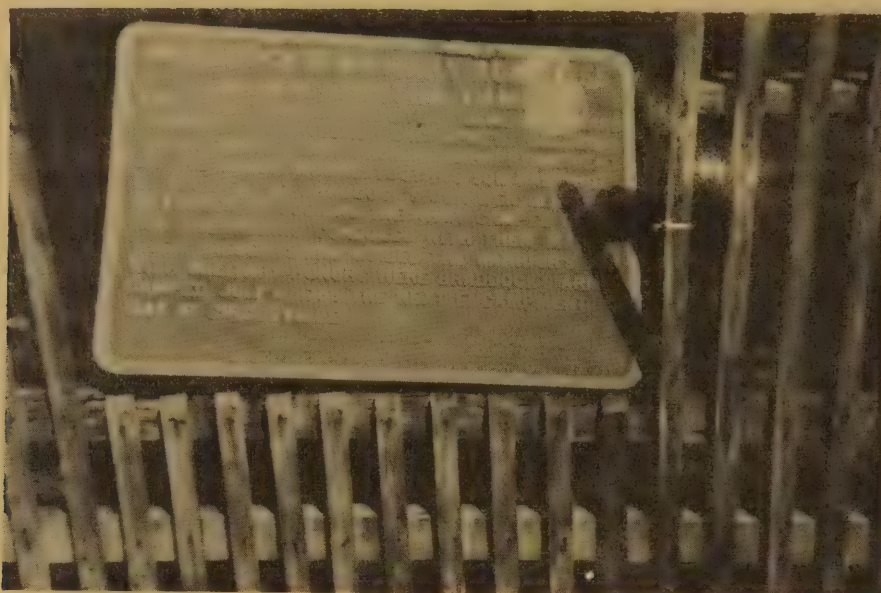
This purchase caused the Indians in Western Pennsylvania to break away from the Iroquois and to team-up with the French. In 1753, Virginia sent George Washington to see about the French building Fort Duquesne. His journey to Fort Duquesne was thru Westmoreland County. He was one of the first white men to travel thru this county. Originally the entire southwestern corner of Pennsylvania was called Westmoreland County.

The English settlers cut-away the forests and spoiled the hunting grounds, while the French dealt largely with furs and skins and did not build houses or engage in agriculture. Thus the Indians had another reason for affiliating with the French instead of with the English.

In the French and Indian Wars of 1754, the English sent General Braddock to capture Fort Duquesne. Braddock set out from Alexandria, Virginia on April 8, 1755 and did not reach the neighborhood of Fort Duquesne until July 8th. The fatal battle followed. So great was the shock of Braddock's defeat that it has become one of the most taught incidents in American Colonial history. On his trip to Fort Duquesne, Braddock traveled thru Sewickley Township near the W.B. Howell residence. A marker erected there November 23, 1932 by the school children of Sewickley Township commemorates the event. On his trip thru the township he allegedly stayed at Simon McGrew's house which is still a residence outside Rillton on Legislative Route 64191. He traveled down the Long Run valley, after leaving the township, on his way to defeat in the vicinity of the present Edgar Thompson Steel Works at Braddock, Pennsylvania.

The French and Indians defeating the "invincible English army" was a morale factor twenty years later when the colonists did battle against the English. The colonists knew the English could be beaten.

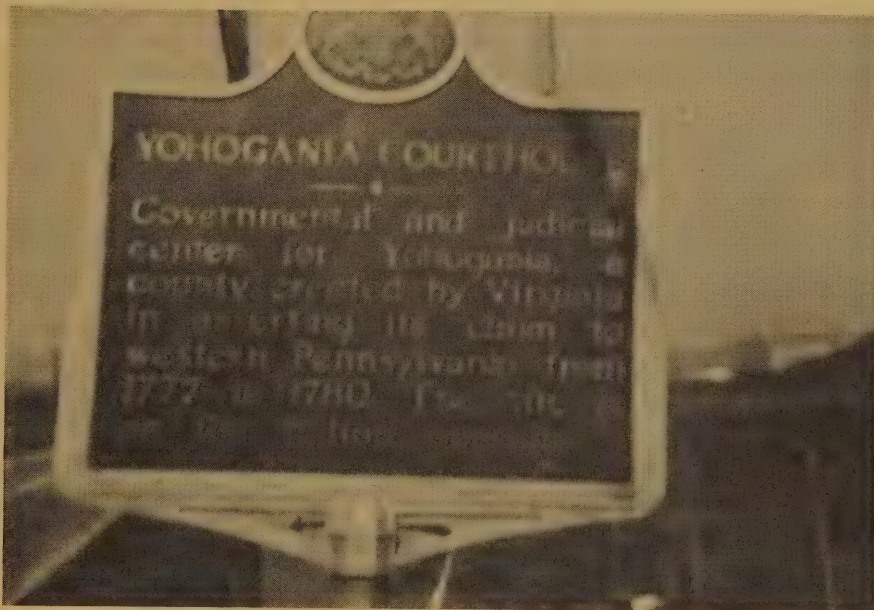
Being that Virginia once claimed Western Pennsylvania, Westmoreland County was a part of their claim. John Parrish in his account of visiting the Quaker Settlement in Sewickley Township makes mention that on August 12, 1773 the Governor of Virginia was in Pittsburg.



At Floreffe, about ten miles from Sewickley Township, on Route 837 in Allegheny County, there is a marker telling of the site of the old Yohogania Court House for this territory when Virginia claimed Western Pennsylvania. Courts were held here during the American Revolution, and because of this dispute between Pennsylvania and Virginia, the Mason and Dixon line was extended. The line was extended from the Maryland boundary in a survey made by David Rittenhouse in 1784. This established the



boundary between Virginia ( now West Virginia) and Pennsylvania just as the Mason and Dixon line did for Pennsylvania and Maryland. So we in Pennsylvania, and thus Sewickley Township, became Pennsylvanians instead of Virginians.



"It had always been the custom of Penn and his successors to reserve sections of land for themselves. The proportion was generally about one acre of reserved land in ten acres sold. This custom was begun in 1700 and kept up constantly for three fourths of a century. There are two such reservations in Westmoreland County. The first was called the "Manor of Denmark" and was situated on the Forbes Road, where the battle of Bushy Run was fought, and contained four thousand eight hundred and sixty one acres. Manor Station on the Pennsylvania Railroad marks its location. The second was known as "Penn's Lodge" containing five thousand five hundred and sixty eight acres, and is now within the limits of Sewickley Township. (The Guffey grants came from this lodge; also the deed for Millgrove school recites this fact.) In these reservations they had retained absolute rights of government. They could make laws, establish courts, appoint judges, and grant or withhold any special privilege they saw fit." They sided with the English in the Revolutionary War. Therefore on June 28, 1779 the "Divesting Act" was passed which took from the Penns most of their territory, leaving them only their private reservations and vested it in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Penns were of course, properly recompensed for it. All titles granted after June 28, 1779 were granted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, tho all titles between April 3, 1769 and the State's independence were granted by the Penns. No warrant for land in Westmoreland County antedates 1768, the year of the Fort Stanwix treaty and the New Purchase, tho we have many settlements which are older than these titles.

Westmoreland County was the eleventh county to be established in Pennsylvania. It was created February 26, 1773. It was taken from Bedford. In

1785 a part of the purchase of 1784 was added thereto. It was named after Westmoreland County, England and was divided into eleven townships. After the Colonial War for independence, Westmoreland gave herself directly in the creation of five other counties. Thus within ten years after its formation, it was considerably cut in area.

Westmoreland County is situated between the 79th and 80th meridians of West Longitude and the 40th and 41st parallels of North Latitude. It is 37 miles long and 29 miles wide and contains 1025 square miles.

In the Whiskey Insurrection, Graham, the excise collector of Westmoreland County, was driven out of Greensburg in 1785. In 1794 John Wells was serving in the same capacity. He was captured and excorted to the county line. On October 22, 1794, a meeting was held in Greensburg and resolutions were passed by citizens present to yield to the laws of the country. Among those from Sewickley Township who took part in this insurrection was a Robert Hamilton.

Westmoreland County was inhabited by Indians. The original Indians here were the Delaware and Shawnees. The Delaware Indians were one of the strongest tribes in the east. They enjoyed good relations with the white settlers. Because of this good relationship, the other Indians regarded them as "women." To become "men" among the other Indian tribes, they had to start a reign of terror against the whites. Sewickley Old Town was a Shawnee settlement. In 1731, the Hathawekela Clan, under Aqueloma, settled at the mouth of the Big Sewickley creek (Gratztown). Roving bands of Delaware and Tuscarora tribes spent some time in Westmoreland County, the encampment being on the Big Sewickley creek near the site of Bell's Mill. When they were grading for the new Legislative Route 64226 in the vicinity of Anna Mary Pierce's farm last year evidence of an Indian graveyard was found. Indian arrow heads and trinkets are found in many sections of Sewickley Township, especially Alum Rocks. The Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society at West Overton (Scottsdale), Pennsylvania has on display several skeletons of Indians taken from the Fullerton farm ( now Shuglies) in Sewickley Township.

Many of the men who fought in the War of 1812 were from this part of the county. The big Indian battle of the War of 1812 was fought near Salem, Ohio at Mississinewa. On March 16, 1847 the legislature created Mississinewa township out of South Huntingdon township. It surrounded West Newton and bordered on Big Sewickley creek. On February 25, 1850 the legislature disbanded the township.

Coming closer to home with the Indians, one of the stories that Florence Bowers mother tells is about the time her grandfather Tilbrook permitted two Indians to sleep in his barn which was located where Hilary Stader now lives at the corner of Sewickley Avenue and Third Street, Herminie, Pennsylvania.



## SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP

The following is from Boucher's History of Westmoreland County:

Sewickley Township was erected in 1835, and was named after the Big Sewickley Creek which flows from its southwestern boundary. It is bounded on the north by North Huntingdon Township, on the east by Hempfield Township, on the south by South Huntingdon Township, and on the west by the Youghiogheny River. Among the early settlers were Gaspar Markle, Jacob Painter, Anthony Blackburn, Caruthers, Carnahans, Campbells, Marchands, Milligans, Pinkertons, Gliberts, McGrews, and others.

Anthony Blackburn settled here in 1770, but removed to Canada a few years later. One of his sons returned and spent the remainder of his days in Sewickley Township. The sons who remained in Canada served in the British Army in the War of 1812, and were on the northwestern frontier. These boys while residents of Sewickley Township had been school mates of General Joseph Markle. After the war was over one of them paid a visit to Westmoreland County and stated that a few days before the commencement of the siege of Fort Meigs, he was lying with a company of Indians concealed near the fort, and that while there Joseph Markle and his orderly Sergeant John C. Plumer, and a part of his company passed close by, and that he (Blackburn) recognized his old schoolmates and acquaintances: Markle and Plumer, and permitted them to pass by without firing upon them. This perhaps saved the lives of all the party.

Another noted family was the Guffey family. William Guffey, the progenitor of the family, came from Ireland, bringing with him his wife and children about 1738; and later settled in Sewickley Township, where he died January 1783. His son, James Guffey, was born in 1736, two years before his father left Ireland. His oldest son, John Guffey, was born in Sewickley Township, August 6, 1764, and was married to Agnes Lowry. His second wife was Rebecca Stewart. James Guffey was his oldest son and was one of thirteen children. James was born at the Guffey homestead, December 15, 1791. He was a soldier in the cavalry under General Joseph Markle in the War of 1812, and was engaged in the battle of Mississinewa. Upon his return from the army he married Hannah, a daughter of James and Mary P. Scott. They settled on the Guffey homestead in 1833. ( Some of the graves can be seen in the Guffey Cemetery near Scott Haven.)

The Greenawalt family was another noted one in the township. Its founder was Jacob Greenawalt; who was a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and who settled on a farm in Sewickley Township about 1798. He was married to Martha Brenneman. One of their children was Captain Caleb Greenawalt who served with distinction in the Civil War.

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Rev. Mungo Dick performed the marriage ceremony for Jacob Greenawalt and his bride. He addressed them for one hour after the ceremony. Capt. Caleb Greenawalt was born June 1, 1830 at "Brown's Ferry Tract" on the Youghiogheny River between Shaner and what is now Scott Haven.

In reading over the history of the Milligans, the following interesting information was discovered:

John Milligan was born in 1752 in Scotland. After being in this country for a while, he settled on a farm in 1780 that was then owned by John Carnahan and since known as the "Willow Tree Farm". (Milligans say this is the farm now occupied by H C Taylor). In 1785 he purchased the farm near the Bell's Mill. † Wm Albright now lives on this farm. In August 1962 the slate roof that was put on this dwelling a 100 years ago is being replaced.)

John Milligan's first residence at "Willow Tree Farm" was nothing more or less than a log cabin, about 30 feet long and 18 feet wide, which was kitchen, bedroom, dining room, all within the enclosure. The garret consisted of all the space the square of the building, and was the granary and provisional repository of all their eatables, their smoked meats, flour, corn, etc.

The house was built of logs unhewed; the cracks were closed by moss, and pieces of wood, split of sufficient size to drive into the innerspace. The floor was made of puncheons, which were simple timbers split into such thickness as to make an even surface, then hewn into the level after the same were laid. There were four windows, which consisted of four lights of glass 8 x 10 inches. The door was also of split material, pinned together, and hung by wooden hinges, with an immense bar fastened on the inside to secure it against forcible entrance. The fastening of the door was a wooden latch with a string passing thru a hole to the outside; and for safety against the intrusion of wandering Indians. The string was pulled inside at night, which was a sure sign that they were home. And when the latch-string was found outside the door, it was conceded that the family was "at home" to the public.

In this brick house of Milligans (built in 1804 from brick made on the premise) the first apple butter west of the mountains was made in 1805. The old Covenanter preaching was done under the sheltering arms of two huge oak trees on the farm. If, in the early morning, the hoot of the owl was heard, and repeated at intervals after the early morning had past till near church time, it meant, "Indians are prowling around, there will be no service, stand by your homes till nex Sunday."

In the year 1802 John Milligan and others left what is now West Newton with a flat boat loaded with flour and whiskey, and after weeks of peril and hard work, reached New Orleans, only to discover, on inspecting his cargo, that the flour has spoiled. John decided that he would reship and take his cargo to Liverpool, England. The whiskey he sold, as it had improved during the time, and the flour was sold to starch makers, bill posters, and to whoever he could get to use any of it. Some was traded for china and various other commodities.

(Arriving in Philadelphia) with the aggregation of china, etc, which has been handed down as heirlooms, they walked the 350 miles to their home on the Sewickley. John Milligan was appointed a justice of the peace in 1790. Many incidents relating to the vows taken in Squire John's office are related by tradition. One is of special interest. During the midnight hours after retiring it necessitated a hurried service to avoid paternal anger which was also after the fleeing youngsters. He sat up in bed and married them.



## SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP

The following was supplied by a member of the Society of Friends and published in Boucher's History of Westmoreland County.

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, as they were called by others in derision, arose in England about the year 1650. They endeavored to carry out in practice the doctrines of the New Testament, and according were opposed to all wars and the use of oaths, while they upheld a free gospel ministry and the equality of all men. They soon became the objects of a bitter persecution which filled the prisons to overflowing and caused the deaths of many through bar equality of all men. William Penn obtained from King Charles II in 1681 the charter for Pennsylvania, with the view of founding a colony where religious liberty might be enjoyed, there were many who were ready to face the trials of a new settlement rather than those they had endured in the Old World.

The first meeting of Friends in Pennsylvania was held at what is now Chester, in Delaware County, and on the Delaware river. With the constant influx of immigrants the settlements were extended into the interior, and new meetings for worship were set-up as necessity demanded. It may be explained that aside from meetings for worship there are meetings for business, and these are designated as preparative, monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings. Two or more preparative meetings may for a monthly, two or more monthly meetings may form a quarterly, and usually several quarterly meetings for a yearly meeting. The monthly meetings are the principal executive branch of the Society, and exercise an oversight over the membership in various ways. New Meetings are established by them, subject to approval of the quarterly meetings, and there has been a kind of genealogical succession, so to speak, throughout their history. Beginning with Chester meeting in 1681, we have Concord set-off in 1684, Newark ( now Kennet) from Concord in 1686; New Garden from Newark in 1718; Nottingham in 1730; Hopewell in Frederick county, Virginia, in 1736; Westland, Washington county, Pennsylvania in 1785; Redstone, Fayette county 1793; and Providence, by division of Redstone in 1817.

In 1773 John Parrish, of Philadelphia, in company with Zebulon Heston and John Lacy, paid a visit to the Western Indians, and from the Journal of the first of the following is somewhat condensed: 8 mo. 12th, Left Pittsburg to visit some Friends in the new settlement about Redstone (Governor of Virginia just arrived in Pittsburg) went down the monongahela about 6 miles and forded; went to one Francis Fisher's a Friend who received them kindly-- had a large family of children. 13th. Had a Meeting with his & 3 other families. 14th. Cross'd the same Fording Place back into Braddock's Road & pass'd thro the Field of Battle ( the Bones yet in sight) travell'd down the Road about 30 miles from Pittsburg; Put up at McDole's, a Presbyterian, a private house. 1st day ye 15th stay'd all day. 16th. Turned back 3 miles into Redstone Road & in about 10 miles riding came into a small settlement of Friends, between the two Sewickillys; and not far from Yohageni are settled Joseph Blackburn, Wm Read, Simeon McGrey, Anthony Blackburn, Dan'l Hammond, James ----, Jos Bedsworth, ---Gilbert. Had a heavenly meeting the 17th at Jos Blackburn's about 30 or 40 persons being present, mostly promising Youth; went towards the upper End of Redstone & lodg'd with Daniel Hammond. 18th. crossed the 2 Redstone creeks along by the fort (hilly fertile land) & got

to Josias Crawford's where were kindly received; and next day by him accompanied to his brother James's. (See Penna Magazine xvi,446)

At Westland Monthly Meeting 10 mo.25,1788:"Redstone Preparative Meeting informs this that friends on the Waters of Sewickley creek request the holding of a meeting among them." A committee was appointed to visit them,who reported 12 mo.27, that they had an opportunity with Friends on Sewickley, and believed further care to be necessary. The request was granted for them to hold a meeting at James McGrew's under further convenience can be made, on the first and fourth days of the week, to begin at the eleventh hour, and the first meeting to be held on the eleventh day of next month.

Twelve men were appointed to sit with them at the opening of the meeting. 1 mo.24,1789:"Part of the Committee appointed to have the care of the meeting on Sewickley attended the opening thereof to their satisfaction." 5 mo.16,1789:"Several of the committee appointed have visited the meeting on Sewickley divers times." and "find further care will be profitable." The old committee of twelve was released 9 mo.20,1789, and a committee of four appointed to extend what care may be needed. On 3 mo.26,1791, the committee was released, and the case referred particularly to the care of Providence Preparative Meeting.

The minutes of Redstone Monthly Meeting, commencing 4 mo.26,1793, and of which Providence Meeting, Fayette county, was a branch, show that Joseph Talbot,wife Mary and four children, Sarah, Elizabeth, Allen, and William settled at Sewickley in that year. Abner Gilbert produced a certificate from Friends in Chester county, 8 mo.31,1798, an unmarried man. The meeting was not yet permanently established, but was "indulged" to be held for definite periods. On 12 mo.28,1798," Providence Preparative Meeting informs that Friends in Sewickley request the establishment of their meeting & also the privilege of holding a preparative, which being considered by this Meeting Rees Cadwalader, Jonas Cattell, William Dixon, John Cope,John Cadwalader, & Henry Troth are appointed to sit with friends of that Meeting, feel after their situation and propriety of such establishment & report their sense thereof to next Meeting." Finally, on 8 mo.30,1799, it was agreed to establish the meeting, and the decision was forwarded to the quarterly meeting for approval; but not till 1826 that it was made a preparative meeting of business. Abner Gilbert was appointed an overseer 6 mo.2,1809, and appointed a member of the "Meeting for Sufferings" 3 mo.29,1811, in the room of his brother Benjamin, deceased. James Means was appointed an overseer 9 mo.1, 1815.

The will of James McGrew, dated 11th of 4th month,1805, contains the following clause:"I give and bequeath unto the Members of Sewickley Meeting all that piece of land struck off by meets and bounds the other day,to Friends,their heirs and assigns forever, provided as soon as the privilege of a Meeting is taken from them it is my will that it fall to my son James, to his heirs and assigns forever, except that part that is enclosed within the fence round the burying ground it is my will and pleasure that that stand forever a burying ground."

By indenture dated 12 mo.12,1832, James A. McGrew, of North Huntingdon township, son of the above James and Rebekah, his wife, released all reversionary interest in the land to Benjamin Gilbert and George Gilbert,



trustees for the Sewickley Preparative Meeting. The amount of land was said to be seven acres, and that it was part of a tract patented to the said James A. McGrew, February 16, 1816. A resurvey in 1851 made it a little less than seven acres. The present meeting house was erected about sixty years ago (1845). The Means, Hammond, McGrew and Blackburn families were from Adams county, Benjamin Gilbert was from the vicinity of Philadelphia, about 1787, but could not be the person mentioned by Parrish.

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FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SEWICKLEY

Anyone marrying outside the pale of the Friend's church cancelled his connection with that religious denomination. Marriage according to the discipline of the Friends, had to be declared five weeks prior to the wedding. The Quakers, avoiding unmeaning terms, and forms, aimed to lead purely spiritual lives. Their usual worship was conducted in solemn silence, each soul for itself. They took no oath, made no compliments, removed not the hat to king or ruler, and said "thee" and "thou" to both friend and foe. Every-day was to them a holy day, and the Sabbath was simply a day of rest. The Indians waged relentless war with the colonies, but they never shed a drop of Quaker blood. The Quakers of Sewickley did not produce enough offspring and being that they only married within their Society, they died out. The few remaining went to their friends in Salem, Ohio vicinity. After the Quaker church was abandoned, meetings were held in the Isaaih Case house where Judd Faust now lives.

## SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP

Sewickley Township was taken from North Huntingdon township and contains 27.62 square miles. It is now chiefly a residential area. Industry is insignificant.

The name SEWICKLEY is an Indian name for SWEET WATER. In "The Village of Sewickley" by Nevin he wrote: "Popular tradition has it that the name Sewickley is derived from an Indian word meaning SWEET WATER, allusion being made to the sugar maples called 'Seweeckly' trees which abounded in this and other localities so named." Sewickley township was once a place of many sugar maples and several sugar syrup mills were located in the township. There are many variations of the spelling of the Indian name for Sewickley. In George Washington's writings the name Sewickley appears as Sweisley. The Indians had a settlement at the mouth of the Big Sewickley creek (Gratztown area) in 1731 which was called Sewickley Old Town. There was also a Sewickley Old Town on the Allegheny River across the river from New Kensington area. Both towns appear on the 1773 map of Westmoreland County.

The early township settlers were self reliant farmers. The township was originally an agricultural center. The rolling hills were well adapted for grazing sheep and cattle. Yet today, one of the houses on the school hill in Herminie is referred to as the "sheep pen" because before becoming a modern dwelling house Daugherty's kept sheep there. Also the map of 1867 shows that Clarkson and Hall had a woolen factory in the Evanstown area near where the bridge crosses the creek to go to the old Carlin farm. One writing makes mention of the fact that "Charles C. Brown worked in Clarkson's woolen factory in Sewickley Township, where he worked until 1872." Several pieces of woolen cloth can be seen today which was made in this factory.

The ground produced good crops of wheat, rye, oats and grass. At the outbreak of the Civil War almost everyone lived on farms, except a few miners along the Youghiogheny River. There were many maple trees in the township and several sugar maple syrup mills where the sap was made into sugar. Clarence Lash often tells of the maple sap he took from the trees along Legislative Rt 64102 between Dick Station and toward Guffey, to the sugar syrup mills. Today only a few samples here and there can be observed. The map of 1867 ( 32 years after the township was erected) shows only the towns to be Futersville (which left the township in 1902), Shaner Station, Guffey Station, Armstrong Station, Price's Station, Waltz Mill, Millgrove, and Mars Hill. The 1890 census showed Scott Haven to have a population of 525. Today it is only about 20% of that figure.

When the Pittsburgh seam of coal was discovered (prior mining was done by drift and slope mining) shafts were sunk and attention was diverted to what was beneath the soil instead of what could be grown on the surface. The farmer, whose land was underlaid with coal, often made enough to retire. The development of the coal mining industry had its effects even on those farmers whose farms had trees which could be made into pit posts and ties. Several mining communities mushroomed near the mine shafts as the mine owners had to build places for their help to live. Mrs Mamie Weddell Ludwick says she had 125 pupils the first year she taught school in Herminie a year after they started sinking the mine shaft. Waltz Mill and Millgrove are the only two towns whose founding did not depend on coal mines.



Back in the 1870's mines at Blackburn (Lowber) were in operation. The map of 1867 shows coal banks (mines) at Gratztown, Shaner, Guffey, and along the Youghiogheny River. An early mine in the township was the Ayers Hollow Mine of the Penn Gas Coal Company which was located on the B & O below where Paul Ehrler now lives. It was opened in 1900 and closed in 1911. The Magee mine of Westmoreland Coal Company was in Yukon, but the slope was in Sewickley Township. It was opened August 18, 1908 and closed July 30, 1954. The slope, starting where the coal cropped out, was seventy six hundred feet long. The mine produced in its day 16,774,318 tons of coal. Sewickley Township Power Company was located in its engine house.



Yukon  
Mine

#### -THE PATCH-

When JJ Collier, manager of mines for The Westmoreland Coal Company, was writing for THE DIAMOND in 1939, he wrote: "The history of the development of the coal industry has never been recorded. In the early days of this country, and for at least seventy five years after the Revolution, ours was an agricultural and not an industrial country. To the early pioneers, coal was only a mineral like limestone or something of the sort, and few of them left any written records of their observations. They were too busy building homes and conquering the wilderness. It has been definitely established, however, that not until 1854 did industry begin to lead agriculture. Since that time the development of the coal industry has played a tremendous part in making the state of Pennsylvania one of the greatest mineral and manufacturing areas in the entire world. "

But this coal mining industry created a new "Social Strata". Previously there were few renters in a community or vicinity. Almost everyone was a land owner until the coal companies built their towns. Then the "renters" outnumbered the land owners. The renters who lived in the company houses or "blocks" were of a class by themselves. This part of town was referred to as the "patch." The original inhabitants were mostly protestants and from northern Europe. Now they were "invaded" by people from the central and northern parts of Europe with a different culture and a different religion.

The Catholic religion came into the communities along with the coal mines. This religious difference caused another schism which took many years to break down.

Each of these different nationalities clustered together, having their own lodges and gatherings. How else could they help each other in a strange land? So we have our Italian lodges, Polish lodges, the German Hall, the SNPJ's, and so forth. Granish town sprung up in the east of Herminie, Little Italy was born down by the creek where the slate dumps are located near Limerick Hill. Limerick Hill was named for the Irish settlers, and so forth in other towns.

These lodges were where the "Old Country" was perpetuated in this new land. Native dances were held along with other forms of recreation; and other customs of the homeland. Even at Christmas time (December 25 and in January) and at Easter (again depending which church you belonged to) they kept their native customs and some even their old country dress. Gradually some of their native dishes crept into this country's menus. The most popular being shown by the many "Pizza" places now being operated and not only by Italians. Marriages in the early coal company towns were something to behold. The colorful native dresses were a thing of beauty. Who has not enjoyed themselves at an Irish "wake"? Just mention a christening in the old days, and many had a week vacation. Things of this nature gave them a chance to meet friends, re-live the old times and break the monotony of coal mining. Because only marriages between the same nationalities were permitted, each married one of his own kind.

The coal companies leaving has eliminated this "social strata". The inhabitants purchased the houses they lived in, remodeled them so that the "sameness" of the blocks disappeared and twain ( blocks and private homes) became one. Now there is intermarriage between nationalities and people of different religious beliefs. Some of the "old country" ways and customs have rubbed off on the "natives". All in all progress has been made by looking at the communities 30 years ago and now in 1962.

In the News Dispatch' Almanac of May 23, 1962 it carried this article: "In 1904 European steamship companies transporting immigrants to the U.S. announced they would reduce their steerage rates to \$10 a person." Immigrant trains would arrive in Greensburg at 11 A.M. at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. In the 1880's the railroad built a wooden building near the depot called "Castle Gardens". Here the immigrants waited until the trains left in the afternoon for the coal fields. The building was torn down in 1909.

The census of 1870 showed that there were only 276 foreign born people in Sewickley Township.

The coal in the Sewickley Township district made excellent coke. Along the railroad in the Shaner-Guffey region about 200 coke ovens were built in the late 80's. Penn Gas Coal Company built 100 ovens at Blackburn (Lowber) which produced 3,396 tons of coke in 1904. Around 1911 the Whyel Coal Company built ovens at Whyel. About 1916 Byrne Coal Company also built some at Whyel. All these had their day and faded away. During World War II the ovens at Whyel were renovated and used but now all ovens are so dilapidated they cannot be used.



Sewickley Township is so located that she is in the position that appears she is being pulled apart by outside forces. The people in the northern part (Riiton) have their cultural, social and business ties with the Irwin district; the western part (Lowber, Gratztown, etc.) mix with West Newton and McKeesport; the southern part( Hutchinson, Waltz Mill etc) trade and fraternalize with West Newton and Mt Pleasant; the eastern part(Herminie, Keystone, etc. look toward Irwin, Jeannette and Greensburg. So with no common bond between them, the various people of the township have a hard time cooperating in township improvement. The lack of a common focal point for the many communities in their religious, trading, business, social and fraternal doings has done nothing to help the township.

We often hear about "Ghost Towns" when the mines have gone. This was said about the township when the mines started closing in 1938. Thank God the prophets of doom were wrong. The coal mining towns that lost their mines at that time have prospered and are in better shape now than ever before. Most of the people in each community took more civic pride and went to work to make the town they lived in a better place. Some of the towns have worked hard on community projects which are for the betterment of their people.

Today there is much discussion going on about having "Medicare" whereby medical aid will be financed to the elderly thru social security. The mine employees had a different kind of medical security. Some of the coal companies and doctors had an arrangement whereby the company deducted a fixed amount each pay from the miner's wages. (\$1.50 a month for married men and 70¢ a month for single men) In return the doctors would administer their services to the employee and his immediate family. It was not a compulsory set-up, but almost all the employees subscribed to it.



The mills of the township were located along streams that could be dammed-up so that the height of the water in the creek could be raised high enough to be channeled in wooden troughs over the top of the wheel. The water falling over the wheel, which had wooden dividers around its perimeter, caused the wheels inside the mill to turn, thus grinding the grain, make flour, or saw wood.(Photo: J W Dant ad) When the arrangement was used to saw wood, the saw operated in an up and down fashion. The mill owner received a share of the grain, flour or lumber as his wages. This had to be bartered or sold, if he could, for

his necessities. From the location of these mills we received the names of communities such as Waltz Mill, Bell's Mill, Millgrove, and Millville. The mills could only operate when the water was high enough to run the mill. Some mills were equipped so horses could walk around a pole and operate the mill. Being that they could not operate when creeks were frozen, there were times there was no bread for months at a time.

Here are some things about the township that are interesting:

When we look back and see the boys today, it is hard to conceive that in the old days some of the boys went into the mines as trappers when they were but 8 years old. Trappers opened the doors that were built in the partitions which were constructed in the mines to regulate the flow of air and for fire prevention purposes. Some held tallow lamps for light. Reading some old history tells about General Cyrus P Markle being a soldier when but 14 years old. H R Sittman, Dick Station, started to teach school when but 14 years old. The picture of Guffey mine shows Louis Maioli, a boy, who went to work at the mines when his father died and the coal company gave him a job so as to help his mother raise the family.

The covered bridge at Bell's Mill was built in 1850 by the county commissioners. It is 104 feet long, single span construction. It is wide enough for just one vehicle. It is the only one remaining in the township, altho at one time there was one across the Big Sewickley creek at Waltz Mill. So today the young lovers have their "Tunnels of Love" in the amusement parks. In the old days they had their covered bridges.



(Rebecca Hough's picture)

"Eli Suter was born in 1819. He bought Waltz Grist Mill and operated it a few years before selling it. At Millville he purchased another flour mill. The product of this he hauled to the Youghiogheny River and floated down the river to Cincinnati, bringing back with him a cargo of merchandise. He also entered into the lumber business, erecting a saw mill which he operated with water power. He sold out in 1849 and moved to what is now Sutersville. He was largely responsible in getting an appropriation of \$5000 from the legislature for the slack water navigation dams" (See: Dam the Yough)

Benjamin Cope came to Sewickley Township about 1839 and engaged in the nursery business in the vicinity of the Quaker Settlement. (Fred Pyles lives on the farm now). He was a Quaker and his nursery is shown on early maps.



Among the pioneer settlers of Sewickley Township was El Smith. He was one of the first to locate in the Quaker Settlement who was not a believer in that religious sect. He purchased from one of the original members of the Quakers a farm and for many years was a prosperous farmer. This is in the vicinity of the N. Fullerton farm.

History tells of a John McDonald around 1850 rescuing a tract of farm land from the wilderness. Around 1767 he built a brick house with brick made and baked on the premise, as were all brick houses in that time. The Frank Maza house on the Guffey road was built on the McDonald farm about the time this brick house was built and is thought to be the house.



The first annual Sewickley Township Community Day was held thursday, August 21, 1947 at Idlewild Park on Rt 30. It was sponsored by the Herminie Business and Civic Association. A bus schedule was arranged with buses leaving all various communities in the township starting at 9:30 A.M. The fare was \$1.00 for adults and reduced rates for children. Besides sporting events, there was dancing and baseball. Gatz prizes included a \$150 electric washer, a \$75 portable radio, and a \$30 electric clock. The 16th outing was held at Idlewild on August 8, 1962 and no charges for transportation.

Back in the early part of the century there was not an election without a full parade, horses, bands, torches, and everything. Sometimes in the earlier parades girls rode horses in the parades. Then this practice was forgotten for a while and revived in the early 1930's. On November 7, 1947 the Republican Standard reported: "the township was again treated to an oldtime political parade when the VFW staged an automobile caravan with the Herminie Band leading the way. A loud speaker system kept the voters informed of the VFW's stand on the bonus question. The parade brought back memories of the good old days when it wasn't an election without a parade."

Politicians are always being accused of doing things that are "off color" at election time. But Herminie has done several things that are history, altho some of the township participated in some of the doings.

Here is a good example that you can never be sure of anything in politics. In the primary election of 1929, the tax collector who had served several terms was a candidate for reelection. He received the Republican, Democratic, and Socialist nominations for the office. Another man received the prohibition nomination by receiving 8 votes. In the General election the man with 8 votes in the primary won. He was reelected the next time. Such was the power of the coal companies in politics. But it was the beginning of their downfall. From then on they lost steadily until the death knell in the 1935 election.

In the bitter contested election of 1935 when the township democratic nominees were termed "catholics" by some of the opposition; altho all the nominees were not catholic. The Herminie precinct ran out of regular ballots. There was no permanent registration, so official ballots were printed according to the number of ballots cast in the previous election. After the white official ballots were all used, more people wanted to vote. So pink sample ballots were used. After 18 months of litigation, twice to the state supreme court, the court finally held that those candidates who would have been elected had all the votes on pink ballots not been cast would be elected. The other offices were declared vacant. This left the three offices of school director vacant. They were filled by the remaining members of the board until the next election.

In the 1945 primary election, the huge Herminie precinct (about 1500 voters) was left without an experienced judge of election when she moved to another township. Herminie was then one huge precinct, not two precincts as now. So the candidates for township office agreed to let her come back and be judge of election even tho she did not live here and could not vote here. No one contested the primary results altho the tax collector fight was bitter.

In 1880 Sewickley Township was divided into three election districts:

First district: was called Sewickley and the voting was done in a tenant house located on the Brick Church property.  
Second district: was called Youghiogheny, and the people voted in School House #1, where Mrs. John VanKirk now lives.  
Third district: was called Logan. Voting was done in a house owned by Sam Smith but occupied by N. Fullerton.

Now in 1962 there are nine election districts: East Herminie, West Herminie, Rillton, Logan (Shaner), Youghiogheny (Scott Haven), Lowber, Cowansburg, Sewickley (Hutchinson), and Whyel.

The election of 1960 was far different than the 1935 General Election. In 1960 even tho the democrats had a catholic as its presidential nominee, the Evangelical United Brethren Church in Herminie continued to play on its chimes at noon and 6 P.M. the songs AVA MARIA and MY ROSARY just as it had done prior to this situation.

Just as a side light as to how fickle politics is, in the election of 1828 John Quincy Adams was running for reelection as President of the United States. He was opposed by Andrew Jackson. Jackson received 136 votes in the township and Adams received 41 votes. In the 1832 election, Jackson received 89 votes William Wirt received 78 votes.



In 1840 Pennsylvania was the leading producer of salt in the United States. Westmoreland county produced a huge share of the state's output. In Sewickley township there were salt wells at Guffey and along the Big Sewickley Creek in the Gratztown area. Today salt does not appear among the county's principal products. ( See: Natural Gas)

"The salt wells were bored by man power. Four men stood on the ground, four on a platform above them and eight men grasped the shaft of the auger, raising it about three feet and leaving it fall. This was repeated many times and the auger was turned a little each time it was raised; much on the principle that water wells are drilled by machine today. There was a rope fastened to the auger after the end of the shaft passed below the ground. It is known they were three years in boring a hole 500 feet deep, but it is scarcely probable that the work was steadily pursued. The salt brine was boiled in kettles and salt pans over wood and later coal fires. The water was pumped from the well with horse power. All this primitive manner of manufacture made it very expensive and for years afterwards a good cow might be exchanged for salt, but brought only one barrel" (From Boucher). On Route 71 east of Arona there is a place yet today known as the "salt works." Salt was very precious because it was needed to preserve meat. Cattle could not be raised without salt. The discovery of salt in this district helped the economy and improve the living standards as now cattle could be raised, the meat preserved, and the people were not dependent on game for fresh meat.

In 1842 Alexander Guffey opened up salt wells, formerly owned by Ongs, at Guffey's Landing on the Youghiogheny river; now known as Guffey Station. The venture proved profitable, large returns in the shape of corn, oats, wheat, ham, "side meats", and such staples being received in exchange for salt from the Guffey wells. Of actual money there was little in circulation. The articles received in barter had to be taken on flats ( boats) to Pittsburg, which was the only market within reach and there disposed of for cash or its equivalent in the shape of desirable merchandise. In the course of time the trade in salt ceased to be remunerative and he turned his attention to the development of coal lands.

Here are some figures about coal mined in the township in 1904:

Keystone	7,587 tons mined	181 days worked	127 employees
Ocean Coal	287,663	267	272
Penn Gas Coal:			
#3 Blackburn	161,216	255	218
(Lowber)	also 3,396 tons of coke produced		
#4 Gratztown	49,859	158	102
Pgh Coal:			
Ocean #1	135,867	188	172
(Scott Haven)			
Shaner	92,801	171	125
#6(Guffey)	113,111	184	128
Amyville-Youghiogheny			
Gas Coal Co.:			
Gratztown	44,476	164	63

In 1961:			
Hutchinson Mine	240,000	220 days	150 employees

In the days before the present public school system was established, if the people in a locality wanted a school, they set-up a school district. It was supported by the people it served. We have the same thing today in township affairs.

If the people of a locality want light and/or water, they set-up, thru the township supervisors, a water and/or light district and the people in that district pay for the services. The street lights are paid for by the foot-frontage of the lot that faces the street. The vacant or unimproved lands pay one fourth the rate for improved land with buildings. The water districts pay according to the assessed valuation of the property, with farms being exempt. The building must be within 600 feet of a fire hydrant to be taxed, as this distance results in lower fire insurance.

This is the tax schedule for the township for 1962:

Westmoreland County road	7 1/2 mills
Westmoreland Co. Institution (County Home)	1 1/2 mills
Sewickley Twp: Road	9 mills
Per capita	\$5 each person 21 to 65 yrs inc.
School	42 mills
Per capita	\$10 each person 21 to 65 yrs inc.
School also collects 1% wage tax on your earnings.	
Herminie Light District	12¢ ft improved, 3¢ ft unimproved land
Water District	5 mills
Keystone Light District	22¢ ft improved, 5 1/2¢ unimproved land
Water District	5 mills
Whyel Light District	24¢ ft improved, 6¢ ft unimproved land
Rillton Light District	12¢ ft improved, 3¢ ft unimproved land
Lowber Light District	24¢ ft improved, 6¢ ft unimproved land.

The number of street lights in a district is used in figuring costs.

There are 3876 people over 21 years of age according to 1961 school census. The 1960 United States census shows 6682 people in the township.

The township has always been fortunate to be served by good utilities. The township has been served by telephone since the Citizen Telephone Company started in Irwin on May 2, 1889. This later became part of the Bell Telephone system. The Herminie office was established in the present building, which is on the site of the old Charles Bolton butcher shop and post office, on November 1, 1929. At that time Herminie was one of the few small towns that was given dial phones. On July 11, 1954 the Bell Telephone Company again modernized their exchange and installed the present Gilbert exchange with dial privileges to just about everywhere in the United States. When Herminie got dial in 1929 there were 95 phones in service from that exchange.

We do not give much consideration to the utilities that serve us until something goes wrong. We all are apt to take them for granted. But what did our people do before the coming of the telephone, electricity, and natural gas?

When the mines in this district opened, they had to manufacture their own electricity. Then as the equipment became older, they subscribed to the services of the West Penn Power Company. Herminie mine was one that made its



own electricity for the mines and blocks to almost the end. Only when it became apparent that the die was cast for the closing of the mines did they switch over to West Penn.

Did you ever hear of The Sewickley Township Power Company? It was incorporated March 17, 1913 and served the Yukon area of the township along with parts of South Huntingdon Township. It was owned by the Westmoreland Coal Company and operated from their engine house at Magee Mine in Yukon. West Penn bought the franchise for \$2000 on August 3, 1932. Then there was the Madison Electric Company which was incorporated on June 19, 1910 for the purpose of "manufacture and supply light, heat, and power, or any of them by electricity, to the public in the township of Sewickley---" This was sold to West Penn Power Co. Today when we speak of heating houses by electricity, 50 years ago the founders of these electric companies were farsighted enough to have their charters permit them to do just that thing.

Natural gas was discovered when they were drilling salt wells at Grapeville, Pennsylvania (near Jeannette) in 1823. For 50 years it was considered a nuisance. James M. Guffey was one of the developers of natural gas fields in this district. Originally there were no gas meters. Assessment was by the number of outlets. In 1904 the Greensboro Gas Company's ten inch high pressure line went from West Newton, thru Herminie, to Irwin. The regulator for this line for Herminie is at the German Hall in Herminie. They could not supply gas to the coal company houses because the companies would not give them the right-of-way. Thus Limerick Hill and Keystone never did get gas. In 1917 the gas line was laid on Oak Street, Rillton. But not until 1939 when the mine was closed was the lines extended to other parts of the town. The township is now supplied by the Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.

Today when we think of electricity, who would think that in 1912 the Jeannette Boro Council had to pass an ordinance before business places could be lighted with electricity.

The Irwin Standard of Tuesday morning, October 19, 1897 had some interesting things to say about Westmoreland Coal Company. Here are some excerpts from that paper:

Pittsburg coal has a low percentage of ash and sulphur. there is small amounts of pyrites. It is excellent for making coke. They get 42 bushels of coke weighing 1500 pounds for a ton of 2240 pounds of coal.

The low ash and sulphur content caused a great demand for Pittsburg coal for steel making. It was also used to manufacture superior gas for household use. "From one ton of 2240 pounds for 17 candle gas, 9500 cubic feet" of gas was obtained. ( The map of 1867 shows many limestone deposits. These large limestone deposits came to be useful when gas was manufactured because lime was used to purify the gas) "One bushel of lime purified 6000 feet of gas."

"As gas coal it is recognized as the best to be obtained and is sold to many different gas companies." (Irwin once had gas street lighting. The artificial gas plant for Irwin was located at Penn Shaft and in November 1901 began furnishing gas to Irwin. About 10 years ago the tanks were dismantled. The discovery of the natural gas region at Jeannette doomed the making of

artificial gas and led to the locating of many glass plants at Jeannette.)

"Westmoreland Coal Company employed! English, Welsh, Scotch, Irish, Swedes, French, Belgians, Germans, Russian, Hungarians, Magyar, Slavs, Poles, Lithuanians, Croatians, Italian, Swiss and Austrian."

In October 1897 Westmoreland Coal Company employees "refused to listen to the harangue of a company of strikers with brass bands and marching clubs in an effort to persuade them to quit work."

"The Pittsburg Daily News is out with a proposition to issue 500 free tickets to the veterans to attend the next annual encampment of the G A R which will be held in 1898 at Cincinnati. These will be distributed among the seven posts receiving the largest number of votes on blanks clipped from the paper." (Cowansburg had a G A R post.)

In October 1897 there was a big draught. The Youghiogheny River was almost all dried up and they were worrying about the fish dying.

"The Jeannette Dispatch preaches quite a sermon in its last edition, against women wearing bustles, and condemns them in most vigorous style, calling on all the fair ones of that town to ignore them. It seems to us that, for an old batchelor, John Trescher, is meddling with things that he has no right to know anything about and which do not concern him in the least."

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The draught of 1897 was so severe that the Westmoreland Water Company loaded 9000 cars with water and sent them to the various mines and coke ovens around Greensburg.

Writing about the Westmoreland Coal Company, it is interesting to note that in January 1924 the company was the first to use a machine, which was "home made", to scatter rock dust in the mines to prevent the coal dust from exploding.

#### "DAM THE YOUGH"

In the early 1930's one of the congressmen was always ready to "dam the Yough" every time he was running for reelection. He well remembered what the Youghiogheny River did for the valley when it was dammed. The people of the river valley always went for this campaign slogan.

The early maps show many coal banks along the Youghiogheny River. Coal cropped out here and thus drift and slope mining was easy. The first coal sent down the Ohio from Pittsburgh was shipped in 1817. Robert Guffey often related that in the year 1808, being a lad of 10 years, he held a copper lamp to give light to the coal diggers. "The lamp was a great contrivance, oblong in shape, and contained lumps of tallow and a wick which was drawn out thru a spout and lighted"

In 1826 shipping coal to Cincinnati in a flat boat was done on an extensive scale. The method was to mine the coal in fair weather, and allow it to accumulate until winter. It was then hauled on sleds to the river and left there until the time of the spring rains. Then it was loaded on flats wheel barrows and taken down the Ohio. When the coal was disposed of, the



boatmen were compelled to walk the entire distance home. In 1847 coal mined in the Guffey region sold in Cincinnati for ten cents a bushel.

Henry Null procured the charter for the slack water navigation along the Youghiogheny River. It was known as the YOUGHIOGHENY NAVIGATION COMPANY. It was incorporated April 18, 1843. In the year 1847 the scheme for improving the Youghiogheny river by slack water system was taken up. A dam was constructed at Elrods (near Boston in Allegheny County) and another at Buena Vista. (Buena Vista was a railroad stop on the Pittsburgh & Connellsville Railroad, later the B & O) The Vista tower of the B & O is still in use. These two dams costs \$100,000 and was raised by subscription to the capital stock of the Youghiogheny Navigation Company. The dams were built of plank and filled with concrete. Eli Suter, who founded Sutersville, was largely interested in getting an appropriation of \$5000 from the legislature for this movement.

Navigation was opened in September 1849 and continued until the winter of 1861 when the heavy freeze caused the ice to gorge and the tops were taken off the dams. These were repaired. In the winter of 1865-66 the ice was very heavy. About June 1, 1866 without apparent reason the upper dam gave way and the result was that the lower dam was broken and the slack water of the Youghiogheny was gone forever.

The early mines along the Youghiogheny River shipped their coal by river to the lower Ohio and Mississippi river cities; hence the great interest in the slack water navigation. Two of the big mining concerns were the Y C H C Co. (Youghiogheny Coal Hollow Coal Company) which wound up its affairs in 1880 and the P C I Co. (Poulton Coal and Iron Company).

The coming of the railroad along the river and the destruction of the dams changed the mining picture along the river and the township. People were no longer dependent upon the depth of the river to ship coal, as the railroad was more reliable and could be extended to where it was needed.

The Pittsburgh and Connellsville Rail Road was incorporated by the legislature April 3, 1837. The railroad from Connellsville to West Newton was built in 1855. On April 10, 1856 the line was extended from West Newton to Guffey. January 14, 1857 it was finished to Pittsburgh. In 1912 this railroad was merged with the Baltimore and Ohio. After the railroad was built to West Newton, and before it was completed to Pittsburgh, people traveled by train to West Newton, got on a river steamer at 8:30 A.M. and arrived in Pittsburgh at 1 P.M.

#### -M A I L-

The township has been served their mail from many different post offices, some of which are no longer remembered. Here is a list of the post offices that once served or is now serving the township:

##### 1. FULTON

This post office was originally to serve the Mars Hill community. It was located on the Irwin-Herminie road where Ben Douglas lives on the Adolph Sereno property. This house was a stopping place when the Mt Pleasant-Pittsburg Turnpike was in existence. Albert's History of Westmoreland County refers to "The United Brethren Church at Mars Hill Post Office. Later this office was moved to Rillton.

2. YOHOGHANY Sometimes spelt Youghiogheny. This was the name of the post office at Shaner. It was closed in 1934. It is now served by R D 1, Irwin, Pennsylvania.
3. WALTZ MILL Now served by R D 2, Ruffsedale, Pa.
4. AMYVILLE One early spelling was Amieville. This was the name of the office at Gratztown. It was previously known as Sewickley, and Creek. It is now served by R D 1, West Newton, Pa.
5. LASH Was the name of the post office at Cowansburg. Was originally called Cowansburg, but changed to Lash after Asa Lash who lived on a farm above Cowansburg.
6. HERMINIE When post office was in Charles Dailey store it was spelt Hermine, same as the name of Hermine White, for whom the town was named.
7. LOWBER Was called Blackburn up to 1910 when name was changed.
8. DICK STATION The post office at Millville. It is now served by R D 1, Irwin, Penna.
9. RILLTON Fulton post office moved there, later called McGrew.
10. HUTCHINSON Established October 1, 1946.
11. SCOTT HAVEN

The southern part of the township started to get Rural Free Delivery thru West Newton post office in late 1897 or early 1898. It expanded from taking in the farms originally until now it includes Gratztown.

When Rural Free Delivery started in the Shaner-Guffey region in 1901, the route started at the Yohoghany post office. It was called Yohoghany R D 1. The mail came in on the railroad. In 1915 the route was expanded and the carrier went to Irwin post office for the mail. It was then called RD 4, Irwin, Penna. At present with the post offices at Shaner, Lash, and Dick Station closed, the R D 1, Irwin route serves about 250 families in the township.

The only robbery of the rural mail carriers was on January 9, 1931 when the man who had the star route out of Greensburg was delivering mail to the post offices along the route. After he had left the mail at Madison, and was going to Yukon, he was waylaid outside of Madison and taken to the vicinity of the Brick Church, near Hutchinson<sup>o</sup> and robbed. The robber was caught.

The Herminie post office has been broken into several times, but nothing of value taken. But in 1912 the thieves went up to John Kretchek's livery stable and secured a quantity of blankets used to cover the horses and for use of patrons. These they soaked in water, covered the safe, and blew it open. When the post office was in the Bolton building, breaking in to it was a "pasttime."



-ATLAS or 1867-

In the Recorder of Deeds Office in the Court House is an Atlas of 1867. The township was only 32 years old then. On page 61 there is a map of "SEWICKLY" Township. Many interesting things can be learned by looking at the map.

TOWNS

1. Waltz Mill, with Waltz Mill post office.
2. Shaner Station, with Youghiogheny post office.
3. Sutersville, which was part of the township until 1902.
4. Gurfey Station
5. Mars Hill, on Irwin-Herminie Rd, with Fulton Post Office.
6. Armstrong Station, on railroad between Shaner and what is now Scott Haven.
7. Price's Station, on railroad between Sutersville and what is now Scott Haven.
8. Buena Vista Station, now called Vista Tower on B & O
9. Millgrove

SAW MILLS

1. On Big Sewickley Creek about 100 feet east of the Covered Bridge at Millbell. (South Huntingdon Twp)
2. On Little Sewickley Creek on Tinstman property at the foot of Pike Street in Herminie. The dam for the mill was just below where the creek coming thru the Newhouse property enters Sewickley Creek.
3. On Big Sewickley Creek at Markles in Millgrove.
4. On creek from Rillton to Dick Station, near where the bridge crosses the creek at old facing mill site.
5. On little Sewickley Creek in Keystone area near where Wm Thomas now lives in the old Weddell farm house.
6. On Big Sewickley Creek at Waltz Mill.

SUGAR SYRUP MILLS

At one time Sewickley Township had many sugar maple trees. There was a sugar maple mill just on the knob above Dick Station on the road to Shaner. The map shows one on the Youghiogheny river at Price's Station, and another near the brick house on Legislative route 64191 that McGrew built in 1802. One was located on the road going across from Lew Williams farm on Rt 71 to the Madison road, near the old John Morris farm. Boucher in his History of Westmoreland makes this pertinent observation: "The sugar camp was a favorite place for young men and women to meet at night to make sugar, and keep the fire going and the water boiling after the older people had gone home; for the boiling was always done in the midst of the grove of trees."

STORES

1. Price's Station
2. Wiley store on outskirts of Shaner
3. Wagner store in Waltz Mill vicinity
4. Dick Station (across from old mill)
5. Waltz Mill
6. Several in Shaner
7. Gurfey Station

- GRIST MILLS
1. On Big Sewickley Creek below Markles in the vicinity of what is now Hutchinson.
  2. Dick Station. The mill was three stories high.
  3. Waltz Mill. The mill was four stories high.
  4. Near Buena Vista

There was a shoe shop in the vicinity of Shaner where people went to have their shoes and boots made.

SALT WORKS      On Big Sewickley Creek at old Gratztown. (Guffey's had salt works in Guffey at 1842 and Onga had them before Guffey.)

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was then called Pittsburg and Connellsville Railroad.

There were several blacksmith shops thruout the township.

- CHURCHES
1. Mars Hill, the old Baptist church, later the United Brethren
  2. Mars Hill Baptist Church on Legislative Route 64191 out from Rillton.
  3. Friends Meeting House (Quaker) which was near Mars Hill Baptist Church.
  4. Methodist Church at Wineland Cemetery on Herminie-Hutchinson road.
  5. Sewickley United Presbyterian Church (the Brick Church)
  6. Methodist Church on lane going into Alta McGrew farm (Road going from Della Best on legislative route 64226 to Scott Haven). Congregation later moved to Blackburn.

- SCHOOLS
1. At intersection of where road from Gratztown, pass Cool Springs, meets legislative route 64226. Built in 1861. Mrs John VanKirk lives in the house now. It was called POINT PLEASANT. When the pupils were sent to the school in vicinity of Anna Mary Pierce's, the name was changed to PLEASANT RIDGE.
  2. Vicinity of Armstrong and Buena Vista
  3. Vicinity of Cope's nursery. Fred Pyle lives on this farm now. It burnt down in 1888 and school was then built at Dick Station.
  4. Mars Hill School. John Arch lives on property now. Built 1837.
  5. Pore's School at Christian Lash's lane.
  6. Millgrove School at Sewickley Grange on Rt 71. Built 1837
  - 
  8. Benford School on Rt 71 on Lew William's farm. Built 1861
  - Sulphur Spring School on legislative route 64102 in Shaner-Guffey region. First school here in 1837.

The township has always had plenty of schools & churches, even today.

Clarkson and Hall had a woolen factor in Evanstown, near where the road goes up to the old Carlin farm.



## WALTZ MILL

Also spelt Walt's Mill, had

- 1.Store and post office together
- 2.Saw Mill
- 3.Grist Mill
- 4.Some Dwellings

## MILLVILLE

(Dick Station)

1. Dwellings
2. Grist Mill
3. Blacksmith shop
4. Store

## MARS HILL

Dr. Henry Mellinger (log house at Boerio's Greenhouse)  
Mars Hill Church  
Cemetery  
School  
Dwellings

## SLAB TOWN

On Irwin-Herminie road below Mars Hill

- 1.Toll House
- 2.Dwellings
- 3.BlackSmith shop
- 4.Fulton post office

## SHANER STATION

1. Many dwellings, appears to be largest in township.
2. Youghiogheny Coal Hollow Coal Co. (YCHC Co)
3. Train depot for Pittsburg Connellsville Railroad
4. Hotel
5. Blacksmith Shop
6. Stores: Ament & Finch--dealers in dry goods, groceries,  
drugs and medicines.  
Wilson & Rupert--Dealers in dry goods and groceries.  
R.G. Newton, Blacksmith  
Philip Bolander--meat market  
Mrs J. Rupert--Store and post office  
(Dry goods refers to cloth and accessories used  
in making clothes, dresses, suits, etc; cloth  
articles for sale.)

GUFFEY STATION

(Received their mail at Shaner)

1. Brinewell Hotel--named after salt wells
- 2.Wm C Gallagher--practical distiller
- 3.D S Christy--a miller
- 4.Moore and Swim distillery
- 5.Todd--a shoe store
- 6.A store
- 7.Railroad station
- 8.Blacksmith shop
- 9.Poulton Coal & Iron Co.(PC&I Co.)

Possum Hollow Rye was made here until 1889 by Moore distillery.

The Atlas of 1876 in the Law Library shows a tannery on the east side of the road from what is now Oakdale Park on Rt 71 to the Covered Bridge. Also a shoe shop along Rt 71 near the Scott Fulmer farm. It shows many mines of the Penn Gas Coal Co. along the Youghioghenny Railroad from Gratztown to Rillton. The coal company was organized in 1859.

From the Atlas of 1867 we get the following facts:

Acres: Improved	11,816
Unimproved	4,288
Valuation	\$370,426
Population: Males	997
Females	939
(The 1960 census was 6,682)	
Dwellings	347
Families	339
Farms	157
School Districts	7
Pupils	354
(In 1961 there were 1518 pupils in public schools and 297 township pupils in parochial school)	
Public roads	93 1/2 miles
Horses	645
Working Oxen and calves	1,233
Cows	662
Sheep	2,500
Swine	1,231

#### Productions for 1867

Bushels of wheat	8,000
Tons of hay	1,261
Bushels of potatoes	4,910
Pounds of butter	50,209
Domestics manufactured (yards)	2,000
Barrels of flour	700
Bushels of coal	850,000
(In 1961 Hutchinson mined 6,000,000 bushels)	



## -D I S A S T E R -

The township has had many disasters in its day, particularly the mine accidents which took lives in explosions and fall. The disasters of recent times that have struck havoc to the township were the St Patrick's Day flood in 1936 and the tornado that went thru the township on its way from White Oak to Uniontown in 1944. It deposited private papers, money, underclothes and other numerous things around Herminie ball field and McCune's farm. People on school house hill in Herminie watched the funnel shaped cloud go over this part of town and disappear towards Madison without knowing the havoc it had created in the part of the township bordering Allegheny County.

The tornado occurred about 6:45 P.M. on June 23, 1944. It came from the McKeesport region, across the river at Robbins Station, up thru Guffey and demolished the house and barn of Guardasoni's on Guffey Hill, ruined the property of Harvey Gaebel, took the house of Thomas Piovesan and lifted it off the foundation and set it back again on the foundation. It took the roof off Mars Hill Baptist Church, traveled over to Herminie across the field south of the football field, went up over Wilp's orchard toward Madison. At Guffey it deposited things it had picked up earlier among which was a \$5.00 bill which Mrs. Robert Ruozzi has. At Struble farm, where Crabapple swimming pool is, it left papers and other things. When it traveled over the township after leaving Mrs Hill it was high enough not to do any damage, but its whirling was visible as it traveled on its way. Old timers say it happened 80 years before.

The people of Gratztown have seen the Youghiogheny River rise and fall many times. Many times it came to their home, but they went upstairs to live or moved out temporarily. But the St Patrick's Day Flood of 1936 was the father of them all. It moved everything and everyone who lived along the river. One of the bad features was the enormous cakes of ice that came down the river. The river was up to the railroad tracks in Gratztown and the Big Sewickley creek was backed-up to Lowber. The road from Lowber to Gratztown was inundated. The people in Gratztown "moved" to the school house which was across the tracks on higher ground. A soup kitchen was set-up in the school to feed the people. People literally slept "standing up" and caught a few winks when possible. You had to walk down the tracks to get to Sutersville. People in the township collected foodstuffs and the Herminie Firemen collected it at their hall. The school bus was used to transport the food to Gratztown by the way of Slaughter Hollow and come down thru old Gratztown. The schoolhouse was "home" for a week until the water receded, houses cleaned, and etc. The fire companies came down with their trucks and washed away the dirt and debris that the river left. But the people went back to live in their home as tho nothing had happened. They built more homes, improved the ones they lived in, and they continue to live as tho all is well that ends well. Every place along the Big and Little Sewickley creeks felt the effects of the downpour and long continued rain on snow that was on the ground.

Somethink that the flood of October 16, 1954 which flooded this area and backed-up the Big Sewickley to Frank Scarpari's garage in Lowber was worse than the 1936 flood. In this 1954 flood the road at the coke ovens in Lowber was covered with water, but better economic conditions of the people made it appear not to be as bad as the 1936 flood.



Guardasoni's house after tornado. It was the old McDonald-Newlin house built about 1750 . See Successful Life. Louise Ruozzi picture.

Before the coming of the Herminie Water District, Herminie had many water problems, as did other communities, and they were solved in various ways. John Creighton owned the Creighton Hotel on Sewickley Avenue and Pike Street. C.H. Bolton, president of the traction company and butcher, lived where Dr. H L Highberger lives on Pike Street. Leutinger owned the bakery where Paul and Jack Kopcak now operate. These three got together and had a deep well made on Madison Avenue near the Paul residence. A cistern was dug in the hill above the well and water from the cistern was piped to these three places. The water from the well was pumped into the cistern. This was in the early 1900's.

Pikulski's who had a hotel on Sewickley Avenue at Second Street had a well dug on Madison Avenue at Second street from which they supplied themselves about 1916.

When the first addition was put on the brick school building in Herminie, a cistern was made between the two buildings, boxed in by the walls of the two buildings. This caught the rain water from the roofs of the buildings and was used for sanitary purposes. The drilled well supplied the drinking water. When the water in the cistern got too low, the firemen would pump water up over the hill from the hydrant on Sewickley Avenue with their fire truck. Sometimes they would pump all day. In 1937 the school had to drill another well to give additional supply of drinking water.



When Irvin Henry built his house in 1897 he had a well drilled across the road near his stable. He had a windmill attached to a pump and a large tank erected above the pump. The windmill operated the pump and kept the home and blacksmith shop supplied with water. John J. Wilson still uses the well for drinking water purposes. John Kretchek, who had a livery stable on fourth street, also had a windmill affair to supply water for the livery stable and his properties on Sewickley Avenue.

Speaking of water, everyone knows the joke about taking a saturday nite bath. With water being available only from the pump in the yard or cistern, which caught rain water; and the water having to be heated on the kitchen stove to take a bath, one can understand it was no joke to take a saturday nite bath. Sam Marchoni had a barber shop on Sewickley Avenue in one of the Krtechek buildings. He supplied hot and cold water and bathing facilities at the rear of his shop to those who wanted it. For 25¢ you could take a bath. He did quite a business until running water became more plentiful with the advent of electric pumps and gas water heaters. Some of the early homes had cook stoves with tanks on the side to heat water; or with coils in the cook stove that heated a tank of water above the stove. Some of the early coal furnaces had coils in the fire boxes by which water was heated and stored in a tank. But you still had to carry the water to be heated. Then the bucket-a-day stoves came into being. A bucket of coal was to last all day. They burnt coal and supplied hot water if you had running water. Of course with the coming of the gas water heater, the electric pump, and modern plumbing, taking a bath became more frequent. Now with the electric and gas water heaters and city water in most homes, we think nothing about taking showers when we want them. Altho many houses in the early 1900's had gas lights, the cooking and heating was done by the coal kitchen stove.

When the Herminie mines closed there was no one willing to do something about Howell's dam and the water system. The company wanted to sell. The township could not buy as it was against the law. John H. Stubbs bought it and he and the fire company operated it until a special law was passed in 1939 by legislature permitting second class townships to aquire a water supply for fire protection. Thus the township got into the water business in Herminie Water District and Lowber Water District because the districts were created to provide the districts with fire protection. Thus the township got into the water business furnishing drinking water as a side line. In April 1941 the Herminie Water District charged \$1.15 a month for private homes with a discount of 15¢ if paid before the 15th. Different businesses were charged according to what was thought they would use. Restaurants and hotels paid \$1.75 a month with 25¢ discount, garages with wash racks \$2.25 a month with 25¢ discount.

The W P A (Works Progress Administration, a New Deal organization) installed the lines and extended the service. Most of the financial backing came from the regular township funds. When the bond issue was floated in 1945 to repay the township, it became a political issue resulting in the defeat of the supervisor then running for reelection. Time has proved the wisdom of the supervisors extending the lines altho some of the practices were questionable.

After paying rent for a number of years, and years of litigation, the Herminie Water District finally purchased the Howell dam from Margaret Howell. Today the district has about 800 customers and all is paid except the bonds that will be due in the future and cannot be paid now. At the present time

the district has meters and you pay a minimum of \$8.50 every three months for 6000 gallons. Then you pay so much every thousand gallons used above the 6000. The average family bill for three months is about \$10. In addition property owners pay 5 mills per year for fire protection which is used for upkeep of the fire plugs and lines.

Now in August 1962 there has been a severe drought. A well was drilled near the dam to provide additional water. Not supplying enough, a line was laid on the surface from Indian Lake, on the Irwin Herminie Road at Rillton, to the dam and water is pumped so as to supply the schools and other users. Negotiations are under way to have the dam dredged so as to provide more storage space for water. With the water shortage we are having, people with cisterns are paying \$3.50 to have 800 gallons of water hauled and put into their cisterns.

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-THE IRWIN HERMINIE TRACTION COMPANY-

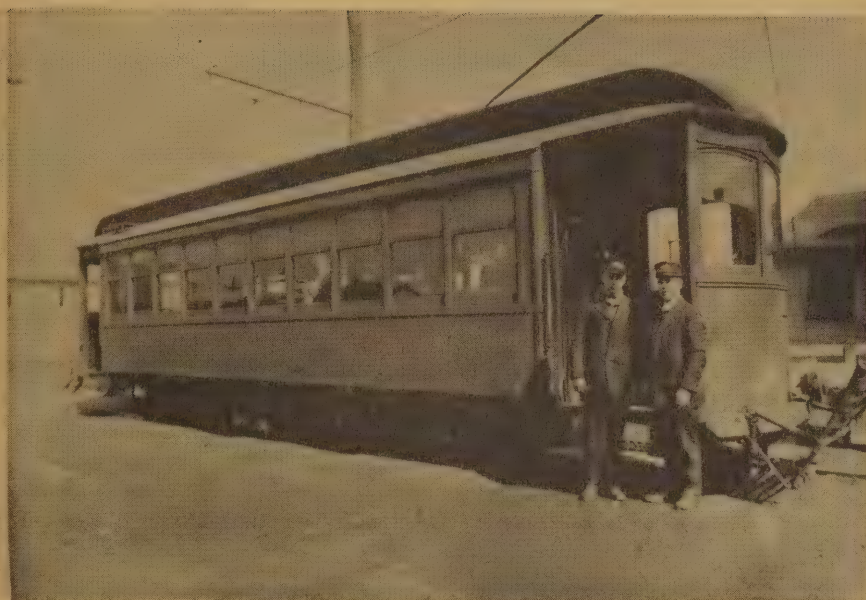
On Saturday October 30, 1909 the street cars of the Irwin Herminie Traction Company began to operate from Herminie to Irwin. The Republican Standard said "Those new cars brought scores of persons to Irwin from Herminie, Rillton, and other points."

"The construction of the trolley line to Herminie was hailed as a great thing for the town as it provided transportation facilities for a populous territory south of town (Irwin) and brought to Irwin each day many shoppers from that district. The line was well patronized for years and on Saturdays half hour service was necessary to accommodate the patrons. The automobile and the construction of an improved highway (Irwin-Herminie Road) paralleling the line has resulted in a steadily decreasing patronage. Economies were effected by operating one-man cars but still the company continued to lose money. The company made plans to discontinue the trolley service and substitute bus service, planning originally to operate the bus line itself," so wrote the same paper when the trolley line was abandoned.

At first the street car was operated by a conductor and a motorman. Later one man did the jobs of both. There was also a baggage car which hauled freight between Irwin and all points including Herminie. At Hahntown street cars from McKeesport were met. Freight and passengers were exchanged. When Hunter Bowers had his confectionery store, his ice cream came this route from McKeesport. At Irwin street cars for Trafford and Greensburg were met. So from Herminie you could go to Connellsville in the east and Pittsburgh in the west. At its heyday the traction company had a "Summer Car" which had a roof and no sides or aisle. You boarded from the sides. The walk along the sides also was used by the conductor to collect fares. It was a treat to ride it on a hot summer day.

The Irwin Herminie Traction Company was granted a franchise to operate bus service in March 1931 to replace the trolleys. They sold the franchise to the Cantoni brothers of Monessen who started to operate the Irwin Herminie Bus Lines on March 17, 1931, the day after the trolleys stopped running. The bus line had a big Studebaker bus making the runs. They followed the street car schedule: first bus out of Herminie at 5:30 A.M. and last at midnite. Hourly service on the hour. Today the first bus on week days is 6:30 A.M. and 7 A.M. on Sundays. The last bus out of Herminie is 10 P.M. weekdays, 11 P.M. Saturdays, and 6 P.M. on Sunday and holidays. The fare from Herminie to Irwin is 35¢.





Walter Evans on left, Walter (Shorty) Daniels on right.  
Walter Daniel's picture

With stopping of the railroad in 1928, the trolley hauled the mail from Irwin. The bus took over from the trolley but just until April 1, 1931. Then it was hauled under contract by motor vehicle. Later the mail started to come from Greensburg by motor vehicle just as it does today.

The street cars in Herminie after World War I were met by taxis operated by James Alguire, Bert Frye and Louis Shoff. Later A.T. Evans operated a taxi. The passenger getting off the street car and wanting to go to Keystone, Herminie #2, Madison, or Yukon and so forth had to run a gauntlet between the different taxi drivers. Eventually Alguire took over all the taxi business. With axle deep mud, the traveler was only too glad to ride to his destination.

Those walking toward Herminie from Mars Hill district, or walking in a northerly direction from Herminie, often took a short cut across the long street car bridge that went down second street over the railroad tracks and creek. Sometimes, especially at nite, they would get caught on the bridge by the approaching street car. Several times the motorman did not see the walkers in time and they were killed by the trolley.

The traction car promoters had dreams of extending the line from Herminie to West Newton via Cowansburg and Lowber. Mute evidence of their dreams can be seen where several butments were erected to cross the creeks. One along the road at the old Lowber mine is very much in evidence. Some of the grading for the line was done, but the idea was abandoned.

In July 1912 Madison Boro granted a franchise to extend the street car lines from Herminie to Madison. The franchise was granted to Herminie Street Railway Co. but the line was never built which was to be extended to Yukon.

## The Year 1931

The Eureka Store sale bill of June 12 & 13, 1931 tells much as to why the year 1931 was chosen for comparison with today: "It is our aim, during these very difficult times, to sell you merchandise at the very lowest prices possible. We know that it is very difficult for many to make "ends meet". This year was when the depression was about the worst.

		6/12/31	4/24/62
3 lb pure kettle rendered lard		29¢	25¢ a lb.
Whole cut chuch roast	(1b)	17¢	69¢
Whole pork shoulder	(1b)	13¢	59¢
Fresh ground meat	3 lb	45¢	59¢ a lb
Plate boiling meat	2 lb	25¢	39¢ a lb
Fancy creamery butter	(1b)	27¢	71¢
Prime beef steak			
(Round, Sirloin or Tenderloin)		35¢	
	Sirloin		\$1.19
	Round or Tenderloin		99¢
3 large cans of milk		23¢	45¢
5 lbs King Midas flour		25¢	55¢
Swans Down cake flour		29¢	43¢
New Potatoes (peck)		39¢	90¢
4 cans red beans		25¢	17¢ a can
2 boxes shredded wheat		21¢	25¢ a box
"Please give us your order for home grown strawberries"	20¢qt		45¢
10 yds bleach muslin		99¢	39¢ yd
Red Top Malt (for home brew)		49¢	don't handle

In looking over these prices of 1931 one must remember that at a near by plant, not in the township, labors and truck drivers could work as many hours a day as they desired at the rate of 10¢ an hour. They were paid at the end of each working day, and re-hired the next morning.

Some other prices in 1931 were: egg coal selling for 8 1/2¢ a bushel, Men's hair cuts 35¢ and shaves 15¢. Today hair cuts are \$1.25 and shaves 75¢.

Herminie Bakery was making 5¢ loaves of bread for the Keystone Stores, gasoline was selling for 14¢ + 3¢ tax, Oil was 25¢ a quart. A & P was selling egges for 22¢ a dozen while N Brock & Son charged 20¢ a dozen. An individual was peddling them at the price of 3 dozen for 50¢.

Serro Motor Company "The talk of the town, New Plymouth with floating power and free wheeling. Smoothness of an eight, economy of a four. At \$535 and up, FOB factory."

The A & P ad for June 1, 1931 had these prices:			Now
8 o'clock coffee	2 lbs	37¢	\$1.59 for 3 lbs
Fels Naphta soap	10 bars	49¢	31¢ for 2
Vienna bread	16 oz	5¢	
Cane sugar	25 lb	\$1.25	2.97
Pork & Beans (Campbells)	4 cans	25¢	31¢ for 2



Now in 1962 fresh milk is selling for 27¢ a qt in the summer and 28¢ a qt in the winter. The Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co. is selling two 1 pound loaves of bread for 37¢. Herminie Bakery is charging 24¢ for a pound loaf.

On Sunday January 18, 1931 the Ocean Coal Company was hauling water for its boilers at the mines. Howell's reservoir was dry. It is dry now in 1962.

-W A R      Y E A R S -

2037655

Newspapers are records of passing history. Here are some items the Friday November 19, 1943 issue of the Republican Standard advertised:

"Tire Situation Tightens. Operators of passenger cars may find it impossible to obtain used tires because commercial vehicles delivering essential goods are now eligible to receive used passenger and truck tires of sizes smaller than 7.50 x 20 to replace tires no longer servicable. November quotas, recently released by OPA (Office of Price Administration) for new passenger and truck tires show 30% fewer for trucks and 14% fewer for passenger cars."

"Ration Free Children's Shoes. Some relief from the shortage of youngster's shoes will be provided about the first of the year by a new supply of children's non-leather shoes for general wear.; to be sold ration free, OPA announced. In general, children up to about eight years of age will benefit. The shoes will have canvas uppers and soles made from remnants and heavy woven fabric, reinforced with vulcanized rubber. Shoes of this type larger than misses and youths' size three will be rationed."

"Increase Civilian Food Supply. More peas, beans, rice and cheddar cheese are going to be available for civilian consumption. Supplies have been increased by the removal or reduction of government set aside orders. Present conditions indicate there will be enough dry beans to provide about 10.4 pounds per capita for civilian consumption in the 1943-44 marketing season, compared to 8.6 pounds in the 1942-43 season."

Here are some prices the A & M Market in Irwin were advertising:

Maine potatoes	100 lb sack	\$3.55
Florida oranges	a dozen	25¢
Iceberg lettuce	a head	15¢
Pillsbury flour	24 1/2 lb sack	1.29
Argo salmon	can	39¢
Tastemaster bread	2 loaves	17¢
Sunshine crackers	2 lb box	34¢
Sirloin steak	pound	43¢ & stamps
Chase & Sanborn coffee	pound	30¢
Macaroni & spaghetti	3 lb box	25¢
Weiners (Sheep casing)	pound	35¢
Crisco	3 lb jar	68¢
NuMaid Oleo	pound	20¢

-RATIONING -

In World War I there was no general rationing plan. To buy a sack of flour you had to buy a **sack** of corn meal, thus making corn meal bread and regular bread; or use the corn meal to make mush. One person would tell another "Joe Blow will have sugar monday." Then everyone went there and got a pound until the grocer sold out. Same with tea, coffee, and other staples. Same thing happened in the early days before we went into World War II. Neighbors would tell each other which grocer had coffee, etc. Of course with the neighborhood grocer, the regular customers came first. Then the customer was an individual; now in the supermarket you are just another person. Those who did not use coffee would get it, trade it for some other item that a neighbor could not use but had purchased because it was scarce. Prior to hostilities tires, autos, bicycles, etc. were rationed. Sugar rationing began in May 1942. Everyone who wanted sugar had to register for the sugar book and stamps. Generally the head of the house registered for all the members of the household. Black coffee drinkers traded sugar stamps for coffee stamps.

Then came fuel oil and gasoline rationing. A, B, or C stamps were issued to paste on your windshield depending on your need for work or your air raid activities. Every car owner was put in a "strata" of society by the A, B, or C sticker on his windshield. A "C" sticker put you in the aristocracy. The amount of gasoline you could buy depended on the sticker you had.

Early in 1943 there was general food rationing. Red stamps for meat, and blue stamps for canned goods were issued. Cooking oils, fats, butter, shoes and cheese became rationed. The point value of the food stamps each week depended upon the amount of food available. Your neighborhood butcher was the housewife's best friend. He had the say so as to whether or not she had a roast for Sunday dinner. He could always lay aside some for his best customers; but he could be "sold out" to others.

In factories and other places of work you could buy counterfeit stamps of all kinds. At one time during the war, there were so many counterfeit gas stamps in circulation that the gasoline supply was threatened.

With house rents frozen and prices on commodities set, prices kept low even though the wages were very high. June 13, 1947 saw the last of rationing.

Acme Supermarket's ad: Brown stamps G H J K good this week

Sirloin steaks	39¢	and 11 brown points per pound
Ground beef	27¢	8 brown points per pound
Hams (whole)	34¢	7 brown points per pound
Oleo	16¢	6 brown points per pound
Rib roast	29¢	9 brown points per pound
Luncheon loaves (meat)	35¢	assorted 4 brown points



-NEGROES-

The census of 1870 showed there were five colored people in Sewickley township.

In 1888 the O'Bannion and Stevens families lived in Rillton. One of the families lived in a log house on the Irwin-Herminie Road near where Ella Trozzo now lives. They worked for Henry Weddell. James H. Clifford was a school teacher and musician who came up from Virginia. He married one of the Stevens girls. Later he moved to Herminie and became Herminie's first barber. His son, James Ward Clifford, was born in Rillton in 1893. He was the only colored person who went to World War I from the township. He was Dr. Latimore's handy man and chauffer. Another son, Clyde, was born in Herminie in 1896.

When the Herminie mine shaft was being sunk in September 1893, the company that sunk the shaft brought a negro laborer with them named "Bud" Lloyd. He was the stepfather of Bess Grandison. Her family lived in a log house on the Dick farm. Later they moved to the log house at the corner of the lot across from the Wineland cemetery. Bess and her sisters walked to Mars Hill School in 1894 with the farm children in the vicinity. Bess Grandison is now Mrs. Van Jackson and lives on Church Street in Herminie. All these years she still retains that jolly laugh of hers.

Phil Thompson was a top cager at the Keystone Mine when the shaft was being sunk in 1902-03. There was only one cage. He and his family lived in the log house at Boerio's greenhouse. Two of the Thompson children appear on the picture of Mars Hill School for the year 1905-06 when Mildred Sittman (Vanatt) was the teacher.

During the first part of the century the coal companies went in for baseball in a big way. They enticed men to play for them by giving them good jobs at the mines. This rivalry between the mines continued into the 20's. Herminie had an ace team in those years, traveling by train to Windber, Fayette City, etc. The teams for the other companies also did their share of traveling. It seems as tho the "whole town" went along when one of the coal company baseball teams were traveling to play. Bolton's meat market had the Bolton A C's around 1906. The backbone of this team was a negro named Sam Scruggs who was the catcher.

Ever since the beginning of high school football, Sewickley has been fortunate in having outstanding negro players starting with James Henderson, Albert Wormack, Russ Thomas and many others.

Negroes were brought in as strike breakers in the 1910 strike. Herminie was the only mine in this district that used them. They quartered them in houses on Church Street between 6th and 7th streets. Most of them left when the strike was over. They were again brought-in in the 1922 strike. Pittsburgh Coal at Scott Haven and Lowber Gas Coal Company used them, along with Herminie. Most of these stayed in Herminie and Scott Haven. The other mines in the township never employed them. At the present time there is only about 6 white families in Scott Haven which prior to the 1922 strike was all white. Both the negroes in Herminie and Scott Haven have their own churches. The two races have always enjoyed good race relationship. Look out and you will see both white and colored children playing together or going to school together.

## -NIKE SITE-

Battery B is located two miles north of Herminie, and occupies four acres of land. The battery, which was activated 17 December 1957 as a Nike-Ajax unit, was converted to a Nike-Hercules, a more advanced and powerful member of the Army's Surface-to-Air-Missile family, on June 15, 1959. On May 9, 1961 the site was officially named the Sewickley Township Battery.

The mission of this unit, like that of the other nine sites comprising the Pittsburgh Defense, is to protect the City of Pittsburgh and its great concentration of vital industries from enemy attack. The Pittsburgh Defense, with control center at Oakdale, Pennsylvania, is part of the 31st Artillery Brigade (Air Defense), which is just one of the many similar complexes scattered across the United States. The entire system is under the control of the United States Army Air Defense Command, with headquarters at Colorado Springs, Colorado. As is true of all Nike-Hercules units, Battery B is on a constant state of alert and ready at all times to assume combat operations.

Battery B is made up of approximately one hundred highly trained soldiers. About half of the men are married and live off post in the Herminie-Irwin area, either in houses leased by the government for military occupation, in houses rented by the men themselves, or in government built housing. The government housing utilized by Battery B consists of sixteen units, located on Mars Hill Road a few miles from the battery. Altho these men are "temporary" they do their part for the community and needless to say their being here has helped the economic life of the township. Very good public relations exist between the Battery and the township people.

## -BANK-

The First National Bank of Herminie was founded in 1912 with a capital of \$25,000. Its assets in its first report were \$91,000. On April 12-13, 1962 it celebrated its 50th anniversary. Today its capital is over \$400,000 and its assets are almost \$4,800,000.

The original bank was in the building now occupied by the Community Library, next to the A & P store. Later A.J. Skrabski's grocery and meat market was moved up hill from its corner location at Sewickley Avenue and Fourth Street and the brick building erected there for the bank. The building was remodeled in 1952. In 1957 the building was enlarged and the parking area added for its customers (altho it is more of a community lot).

At one time Sewickley Township was served by banks at Yukon, Sutersville, Herminie, and other banks in nearby towns. The Yukon and Sutersville, as were many others, was caught in the financial squeeze when all banks in the United States were closed in March 1933. The Herminie bank survived by having good foresight. When the bank opened for business after the bank closing holiday, they would only permit its depositors to withdraw \$50 a month from their account, except for emergencies. Thus by doing so there was no "run" on the bank and those who had mortgages were not forced to the wall. At that time this decision caused much criticism, but as time went by the bank's wise decision became apparent to both the depositor and the creditor.



Altho the Herminie bank had been entered into several times in the past and the desks ransacked, the armed robbery on the morning of February 16, 1961 was the first time anything of value was taken. All but a few dollars of the \$22,900 were recovered when the robber was apprehended near the Margaret Howell residence the same day as the robbery.

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#### -ORGANIZATIONS-

The Loyal Order of Moose is a fraternal and beneficial society dedicated to take care of its sick and needy, and to care for the widows and children of departed Moose members. The Moose believe that every child is entitled to at least a high school education and a trade and dedicates itself to every child under fourteen years of age whose father has been a member of the Order for five years and remained in good standing all the time to see that they get that opportunity. The Loyal Order of Moose, Herminie Lodge No. 981 was instituted on February 24, 1918. When organized it had 100 members. Today its membership is 60. There is only one charter member still in the lodge: Harry G. Glunt. The lodge has helped and donated to all the needy and worthy causes in the community. They help maintain the Home for Orphan Children at Mooseheart, Illinois. The home has about 1400 children at present. The Home for the Aged at Moosehaven, Florida has about 400 aged members.

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Herminie has several groups of women who are doing their part to make Herminie a better place in which to live. One of these organizations is the Herminie Woman's Club. It was organized and federated in 1936. It holds regular meetings the second monday of each month at eight o'clock in the fire hall at Herminie. The meeting consists of a business meeting, entertainment, and refreshments. At the present time forty women comprise its membership. The object of the Herminie Woman's Club is to develop the civic welfare of the community. It helps promote the progress and work of the State Federation of Pennsylvania Women.

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## ARMSTRONG STATION

Armstrong Station was the name of a coal mining town that once existed along the Youghiogheny River between what is now Scott Haven and Shaner. C.H. Armstrong had several mines in the vicinity. What is thought to be the first shaft in the township was here. Charles Armstrong had a mine here in 1850. It was opened by the Fulton Brothers who later went to Irwin, Penna.

Dr. William J. Latimore was born and reared here. Dr. Latimore's father operated a store here. George Howard Boggs' father was a clerk in the store.

Around 1870 there was a strike at the mines. Strike breakers attempted to cross the river in boats. With some other assistance, the boats never reached Armstrong. It is spoken of as a "massacre." Today no one lives here.

The Atlas of 1876 shows that James Hayes had coal mines in this region.

## - COWANSBURG -



(Rouse Pharmacy picture)

COWANSBURG was named after the Cowan family. Edgar Cowan was a United Senator from 1861 to 1867. He was born in Sewickley Township September 19, 1815. He was a member of the bar in Greensburg. He was the only attorney from the county who ever succeeded in being elected a United States Senator. Sewickley Township has had two United States Senators; the other being Joseph Finch Guffey. In 1861 Cowan was elected to the United States Senate by the legislature. Election by popular vote was not yet a law. He was in the senate during the Civil War and advocated "burying the hatchet" as soon as the war was over.

Senator Cowan believed :That the north should not violate the Constitution in coercing the south; that the war was made to suppress the rebellion and not to make conquest of the Confederate States. These views did not please the legislature and he was not reelected in 1866.



In 1872 Senator Cowan wrote a very strong newspaper article about the rights and wrongs of women in Pennsylvania law. He died August 31, 1885. His son, Dr. Frank Cowan, was one of President Johnson's private secretaries. He did a great deal of work in the celebrated impeachment trial of that day.

In 1881 Samuel Peoples and D.T. Marsh were partners in a mercantile business in Cowansburg. The partnership lasted seven years then each went in business for himself. In 1903 Marsh was appointed postmaster.



The Marsh store in Cowansburg

Cowansburg was the meeting place for the men who served in the Civil War from the township. Their Grand Army of the Republic (G A R) post was called the Greenawalt Post No. 399 after Major Greenawalt who was killed May 17, 1864. He is buried at Mars Hill cemetery. They met above the Marsh store.

The town of Cowansburg does not appear on the map of 1867 but does appear in the 1876 Atlas. Here the town is laid out and it shows a shoe store, a store, J E Cowan's store, and a James DeWeese butcher shop and Slaughterhouse in slaughter Hollow.

Originally the post office at Cowansburg was called Cowansburg. But do to mix ups with Cannonsburg, the name was changed to Lash post office after Asa Lash, a farmer on the hill above Cowansburg. The town continued to be called Cowansburg. Since the post office has been closed, it is serviced by R D 1, Irwin, Pennsylvania.

The United Presbyterian Church is an old land mark in the town. No church is held there now, only Union Sunday School. When it was built, it was a very strict congregation. No social activities of any kind were permitted in the building. There was no music. When it was time to sing Squire Brown would hit a tuning fork for the key to start singing. The Civil War vets started to have

their reunions on Decoration Day here. One Decoration Day it rained and C.D. Aultman, a trustee and a Vet, took them into the church basement to eat their lunch. He was called on the carpet by the congregation for permitting this to be done in the building.



The United Presbyterian Church

Cowansburg had its "regular" band as did the other communities. It also had a Fife and Drum Corps composed of Civil War Vets who loved to parade. They went to parades and marched on Decoration Day. The martial strains of the Fife and Drum Corps, as well as band music, were heard at each Decoration Day parade. Oratory and music featured the program until noon, when picnic baskets were opened and families enjoyed the meal together.







Like the names of other places, Slaughter Hollow received its name because James DeWeese had a slaughter house a short way up the hollow from Cowansburg. This hollow was in the news in 1959 when a Norwin high school girl was found murdered here.

#### -D I C K   S T A T I O N -

Dick Station was named after Rev. Mungo Dick who purchased the Dick Farm in Sewickley Township in 1808. At one time he owned two farms in the township. (See: Brick Church for more about Rev. Dick)

Dick Station was the name of the post office while the community was called Millville. Today there is no post office but the community is called Dick Station. There was a grist mill to make flour and grind grain on the property lately owned by Frank True and known as the old Mains property. Leland S. Lash, a descendant of the original owners, says he has always been told the mill was built around the Revolutionary War period and was supposedly the first of its kind in this part of the country. The grist mill was a two story affair with the lower part made of stone and upper story wood. Power to operate the water wheel came from the creek nearby. Stone mill stones were used to ground the flour and grain. Later steam was used to turn these stone burs. The mill burnt down around 1900. When it was rebuilt a gasoline motor was used to furnish the power. The making of flour was discontinued after the fire because the rolls were damaged. It was last operated by Jess Mains who also had a store across the road from the mill, but north of the dwelling house. Here in this store was the first post office. In the story "A Successful Life" printed under Guffey caption, it tells of Mrs. McGrew going six miles to a mill. This could have been the mill referred to in the story. Some of the stones of the old build have been rebuilt into a partly completed building. A round mill stone from the old mill has been imbedded into one of the walls of the present structure. This is shown on the picture.



The old mill stone is the round stone in the middle.

Winelands had a handle factory on the hill next to the Frank Grimm property. It made toys, ladders, sleighs, wagons, wagon spokes, and pick handles for most of the mines around here in the late 90' and early 1900's. It was a very large affair. Dick Station had its band in the early 1900's as did the other communities. The Wineland boys being musicians, had the band practice here.

The community of Millville is not shown on the map of 1867 but is shown on the map of 1876. Sara Penman's grandfather, Lloyd McCubbins, had his blacksmith shop here.

As early as the 1820's John Newlin, father of Wm C. Newlin, was engaged in the mercantile business here. The store was on the property across the creek from the Sittman home. In the early days it was a trading post. In past years old coins and large size copper pennies have been recovered from this site. In 1875 C D Aultman had a store here. Henry R. Sittman started in the mercantile business in 1887. In 1903 he became postmaster at Dick Station and the post office was moved from the Mains store to this store. Here it stayed until the office was closed and mail delivered thru RD1, Irwin, Pa.

Dick Station's first school house was located on the lot where Rosensteel's now live. It was a red school house with small narrow windows. The second school to serve the community was the one near the Albert Cope nursery. When this school burnt down, the school was brought back to Dick Station in 1888 on land donated by Albert Lash.

Mary Sittman Wilbert wrote: "The young people of my day really had a good time. We played tennis at the Bogg's court, took sunday afternoon hikes to Alum Rocks, ate picnic lunches at the Fair Grounds, had corn roasts in the fall, and in the winter we went skating on the "cattail ponds" and went to spelling bees and box socials at the school house. I also know that sleighing parties went to Jacktown Hotel for hot oyster stew."



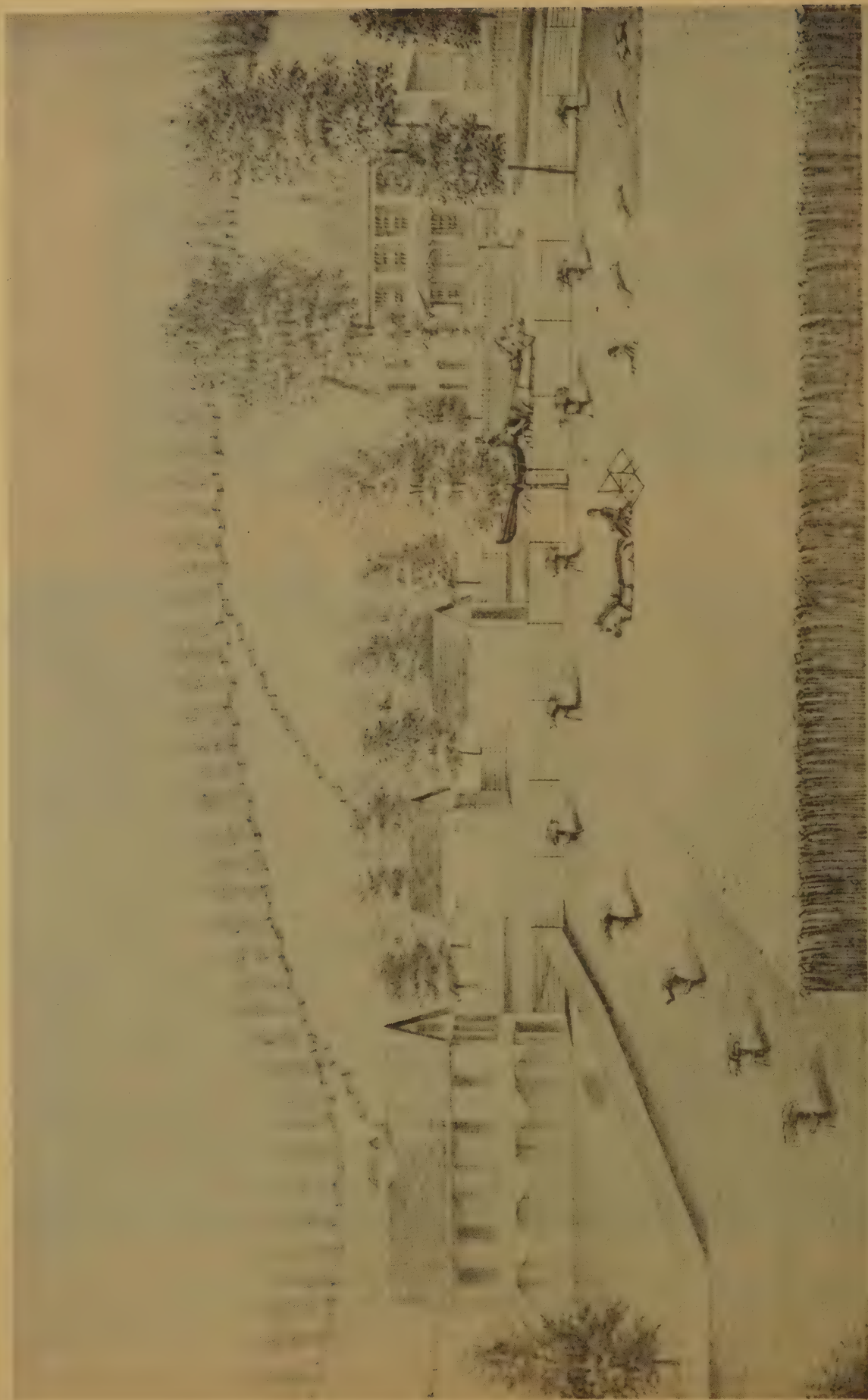


This is the school house at Dick Station now used by The Holiness Mission Church.



Wm Blackburn, Gertrude Sittman, Charles Wiley and Nancy Marsh enjoying Decoration Day 1905 at the Fair Grounds. Nancy M. Kuhn's picture





RESIDENCE OF M. M. DICK  
SEWICKLY TP., WESTMORELAND CO., PA.

From the Atlas of 1876. Felix Angelcyk now lives on this farm.





Third annual fair at Fairgrounds in 1890. W.B.Howell at organ. Margaret Howell's picture.



-F A I R   G R O U N D   S-

The Fair Grounds, which would have done honor to any community, was located on the John Pierce land at Dick Station. It was organized in 1887 by a group of men of the community and nearby under the name of SEWICKLEY INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION. Among the organizers were William Buchanan Howell, Nathan Fullerton and Henry Weddell. The fair lasted until the mid 90's. For several years prior to coming to Dick Station, the fair was held in a grove below the Quaker cemetery. Clarence Lash, who was born in the stone house nearby, attended the fair when it was in the grove.

The Fair at Dick Station had many buildings for the horses and animals which were displayed at fair time which lasted for several days each year. There was a large octagon shaped building in the center of the grounds that served as the band stand and cook house. There was a large pavillion which was used as a dancing platform and for display purposes. In the Floral Hall flowers and so forth were displayed. Women in those days prided themselves in their needle work and doilies which they made to decorate their homes. These along with quilts and other articles made of thread and cloth were displayed. The Floral Hall was the last building standing on the grounds. Demonstrations were given as to the carding and making of wool. Also spinning flax was shown.

There was a race track where races were held and sulkey races ran. Every fair had an ox roast. Even when the fair no longer existed, James DeWeese held ox roasts. Going down the road from the cross roads at Dick Station towards the creek, there were stalls on the left side for horses and cattle which were on display. On the right side at the lower end the race horses and sulkey horses were kept after and between races. There was a huge well dug near the center of the grounds which supplied the water needed for cooking and drinking. The many huge trees provided plenty of shade and many picnics were held here after the fair stopped. We must remember that at the turn of the century there were no nearby parks. Transportation is not what it is today. So train loads of sunday school and church people from Irwin and surroundings came to Dick Station by train and walked up to the Fair Grounds for their outings. Mrs. Frank McClain said that many times she came from Irwin by train for picnics here.

After the fairs were abandoned, Camp Meetings were held here with talented imported negro artists who were brought in to provide the singing. Dances were also held here. Some of the buildings were standing until the first World War. In the early 1930's political meetings of the Democrats were held here as were picnics on sundays.

Paul Labuda has a fair book of the fair for September 24, 25, and 26, 1889. It shows the various exhibits that will be shown, advertisements and prices.

Single admission	25¢
Single admission, children under twelve	15¢
Horse and rider	40¢
Single or double horse carriage and driver	40¢
Each additional passenger	25¢



It has ads for:

H.R. Sittman, Millville, dealer in dry goods, groceries, boots, shoes, hats. Standard patent medicines and everything usually kept in a first class general store.

F.A. Farmer, Marchand Station, Blackburn, Pa. Dealer in dry goods, groceries, notions, furniture, The White sewing machine. Hats and caps, boots and shoes, provisions, watches, clocks and jewelry.

W.B. Wineland--wagon maker and handle manufacturer.

All kinds of repairing done promptly. Millville, Pa.

D.T. Marsh--General Store, Cowansburg. We only ask a fair profit for the best goods. Call and see them before purchasing elsewhere.

Samuel Peoples, Cowansburg--Dealer in dry goods, groceries, boots, shoes, hats, hardware, Queensware and everything kept in a general store.

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-G R A T Z T O W N-



Gratztown about 1912. Jacob Smith store is first building.

George Smith's picture

Gratztown can claim ancestry that goes back to the Indians. It is the oldest establishment in Sewickley Township.

SEWICKLEY OLD TOWN was one of the few Shawnee settlements in this district. In the Gratztown vicinity in 1731(some say 1721), the Hathawekela Clan, under Aquelma, settled at the mouth of the Big Sewickley Creek. The map of Westmoreland county for 1773 distributed by the Westmoreland Fayette Historical Branch shows Sewickley Old Town to be in the Gratztown area; also a Sewickley Old Town across the river from the New Kensington area.

Mulkearn and Pugh tell a story in their "A Traveler's Guide to Historic Western Pennsylvania": "Sewickley Old Town was an Indian village near the confluence of the Youghiogheny River and Big Sewickley creek. George Croghan, famous Indian trader, had a trading post here before 1754. During the French and Indian War Croghan lost this stand which he described as "one house with stores at the Oswegee Botto about twenty five miles from Fort DuQuesne up Youghyoganie with Fields fenced and Grain in the Ground." About two o'clock in the afternoon, May 28, 1763, a group of Delaware Indians swooped down upon Colonel Wm Clapham's "who was settled at the Sewickley old town, about twenty five miles from here (Fort Pitt) on the Youghyogane River." At a conference at Logstown August 2, 1749, the Six Nations Indians deeded to George Croghan a tract of land (60,000 acres) "lying and being on the river Yoxhiogeni. Including the Indian village called Sewickley Old Town." This deed is recorded in the Recorder's Office in Philadelphia."

Attorney Lewis Walkinshaw, a county historian, in speaking before the Rotary Club in West Newton said: "Due to the close proximity of Co. Wm Chapham's plantation can be said to be, along with Col. Chapham's fort, the ancestor of present West Newton. There was a famous Indian town near the mouth of the Sewickley Creek, called Sewickley Old Town. We have the record of Jonas Davenport, an early trader, who made an affidavit to the Provincial Council at Philadelphia October 29, 1721, with reference to Sewickley Indian town, that there were "fifty families lately from South Carolina to Potomack, and thence thither, making 100 men. Aqueloma is their chief." James Kenny, a Quaker merchant at Ft. Pitt, recorded this interesting item in his diary: December 22, 1761. Its less or more snow every night and generally dull weather. I understand by Josiah Davenport, who was lately up at Chapham's, that the old Colonel lives like some prince; keeps many hands at work; raised many hundreds of bushels of corn this summer; but the turkeys like to destroy much of it; they were so thick about his corn field, they shot a heap of them. The place is situated at the mouth of the Sewickley creek on the Youghiogheny."

Simon Gratz owned much of the land in the vicinity and up to what is now Lowber. He sold to the Blackburns some of the land upon which Lowber is located. So from this man's name the town of Gratztown derived its name.

Much of the land between the railroad and the river was owned by a Markle family. They laid out some of the lots and as a result the name MARKLETON was given at times to this plot of ground.

Towards West Newton, across the creek, the Ohio Company in 1754 had a trading post. The British flag flew here 10 years before it did at Ft. Duquesne. It would be safe in saying this trading post and vicinity around here is the oldest place around here where white men settled in this district.





When the Penn Gas Coal Company built the railroad in 1874 from Irwin to connect with the Pittsburgh Connellsville Railroad near the school, the town was called JUNCTION CITY. Some papers refer to the junction as Sewickley Junction. Another place says the junction of the two railroads was at Lock No.4. A map of around 1900 and newspaper articles shows the vicinity to be designated Sewickley.

The name of the post office for this vicinity also had a varier career. It appears that the name of the first post office was Sewickley. But do to confusion with another Sewickley, the name of the post office was changed to Creek post office. Some time later the Amiville-Youghiogheny Coal Company, who had a mine near where the school is located, had the post office changed to Amyville. This name was used until the post office was closed and rural free delivery was established thru the West Newton post office.





Primitive M E Church

The Penn Gas Coal Company had its mine where the road coming from Lowber ( Leg. Rt 64104) crosses the B & O railroad. The slate dump is still very much in evidence. The company built some houses along the road going to Sutersville, between the railroad and the river which are still being used as dwellings. Mine No. 4 at Gratztown was opened in 1875. It was closed in 1903. Coal statistics for the mine appear elsewhere. In 1889 they employed a man who acted as station agent, clerk and telegraph operator. In 1880 it employed 250 men. The miners in this mine were paid 3 1/2 cents for mining a bushel of coal, while the men in their other mines were paid 70 cents a ton. The Poulton Coal and Iron Company ( P C & I) also had mines in this vicinity.

Many interesting things about the vicinity are shown on the map of 1867 among which are the salt wells located on the Big Sewickley creek and the coal banks of the Youghioghenny Coal Hollow Coal Co. (YCHC Co.)

In 1900 James Whiteman had a store in Gratztown. The same year Jacob Smith started in the mercantile business in Gratztown. In 1901 Smith bought out Whiteman and continued in business. The post office of Amyville was in Smith's store for years until the post office was closed. At one time Jacob Smith owned eleven residence in Gratztown.

The brick road from West Newton thru Gratztown to Sutersville was started in 1914. Thus Gratztown had the first improved road in Sewickley Township.



# YOUGHIOGHENY RAILROAD

The Penn Gas Coal Company built the Youghiogheny Railroad from Irwin to Gratztown, a distance of about 10 miles, in 1874. Rev. Page Blackburn owned the land where the right-of-way went on its way from Blackburn to Gratztown. He insisted that the coal company have two passenger trains a day on the road and also haul mail, in addition to its hauling coal.

The railroad connected to the Pennsylvania railroad at Irwin and to the Pittsburg-Connellsville ( now the B & O ) at what is now Gratztown, near the school. Originally it was a narrow gauge railroad; but later changed to standard gauge. The last passenger train over the road was in 1918. This was the second railroad in the township. The first was the Pittsburg and Connellsville which was built from Connellsville to Guffey in 1856. The first railroad in the county was when the Pennsylvania Railroad built it from Pittsburgh to Radebaugh on July 5, 1852. This engine was sent from the east via the canal to Pittsburgh where it was assembled and made the trip to Radebaugh. In later years (about 1900) the Pennsylvania purchased the Youghiogheny railroad.

The Irwin Standard of tuesday morning, October 19, 1897 carried this advertisement: Youghiogheny Railroad from Irwin Station PRR to Sewickley, Pittsburg Branch of B & O Railroad. On and after monday, Nov. 10, 1893, trains will run on this road daily, except sunday, as follows:

A.M.	P.M.	Stations	A.M.	P.M.
6:30	3:10	PRR at Irwin	8:00	4:35
6:34	3:14	Shaft #2 (Hahntown)	7:55	4:27
6:39	3:19	Chambers	7:50	4:20
6:42	3:22	McGrew's (Rillton)	7:46	4:19
6:48	3:28	Millville (Dick Station)	7:40	4:15
6:52	3:32	Cowans (Cowansburg)	7:36	4:14
6:59	3:35	Marchand (Lowber)	7:31	4:03
7:05	3:40	Gratztown (Intersection)	7:25	4:00
SOUTHEWARD			NORTHWARD	
Irwin Accomodation	Sewickley Express		Sewickley Accomodation	Irwin Accomodation

The passenger cars of the early trains and engines were rather crude affairs. The first locomotives burnt wood. At certain distances stations had piles of wood to load on the train for fuel. The passenger coaches were made of wood and were small. They were heated by a small stove which burnt wood. They were lighted by candles or kerosene lamps.

The tunnel used by this railroad at Chambers is now being surveyed by the Civilian Defense as to using it for a fall out shelter for civilians in case of an atomic war. The tunnel is about 400 feet long, 30 feet high and 8 feet wide. At present the tunnel is not in use.

(Charles Henry has the copy of the Irwin Standard refered to)

-G U F F E Y-

Guffey Station, now referred to as just Guffey, was named after Alexander Gurrey. In 1842 Alexander Guffey opened salt wells at Guffey's Landing on the Youghiogheny river. O'ng formerly had these salt wells.

William Guffey was a native of Ireland. When he came to America he settled on the old Guffey homestead in Sewickley Township. James Baird bought this tract of land from King George in 1769 for twenty-one hundred pounds. William Guffey was a member of the General Forbes expedition.

In 1780 James Guffey bought several hundred acres of land which is now in Sewickley Township. Guffey's have a family archive that shows all these early transactions. One of the early deeds shows the autograph of Richard Penn. This land was possibly part of "Penn's Lodge" they reserved for themselves.

The Guffey's opened the first coal mines in 1806 on their land. In 1817 they shipped the first coal down the Ohio from Pittsburgh.

The valley, from where the Guffey railroad station stood on the B & O back up towards the Italian Hall was the "Old Possum Hollow." Where the creek that runs this valley enters the Youghiogheny river was Guffey's Landing. One of the things Alex Guffey insisted on for his permission for the Pittsburgh Connellsville Railroad ( now the B & O ) to build a railroad across his property was that all trains traveling on the railroad stop at Guffey if it was necessary for people to get on or off the train. Thus the village was insured deluxe train service. Altho Guffey had good train service, they had no post office. They went to Shaner for their mail. Possum Hollow Rye was made here by the Moore Distillery until 1889. In 1851 Moore's raised a mill here.

The map of 1867 shows many places in Guffey, among which are:

1. Brinewell House, which was a hotel and burnt down about 1900
2. D.S. Christy, who was a miller
3. The Moore and Swim Distillery
4. D.T. Harvey, an attorney at law
5. Todd's shoe store
6. A store
7. The railroad station
8. A blacksmith shop
9. Wm Gallagher, a practical distiller, who worked for the Thomas Moore distillery. He was born January 29, 1835. Later he quit the distillery and went to Shaner where he was an undertaker.

The early map shows many coal banks (mines) in the Guffey region. They were operated by the PC & I (Paulton Coal and Iron Company). In the early 1880's the Guffey mine was opened near Guffey. Then the Slope mine was opened by Wm Kliment. It had about 30 houses. There was once between 300 and 400 miners in this valley. Every house had 8 to 10 boarders. In 1898 the Pittsburgh Coal Co. bought all the mines along the river. Today there is one company house standing and several other homes. There was a short stimulus in the coal mining industry during the war but it was short lived.





No. 6 mine. Harry Forgie's picture. The "boy miner" is Louis Maioli whose father had died and the company gave him a job to help his mother raise the family.

One of the Guffey descendants was Joseph Finch Guffey, whose father John Guffey was once sheriff of Westmoreland County. U.S. Senator Guffey was born in Sewickley Township and was one of the two men from the township who became United States Senators. During the New Deal days of President Roosevelt he was a keystone in the New Deal program.

There was a large slaughterhouse at the bottom of Guffey hill in the early 1900's. Cervi's had a meat market in Guffey. **Mr. Cervi** came to Guffey in 1894. Mr. Ghion, Mrs Adelmo Terrijoni's father, is the only immigrant left in the valley. He came to Guffey in 1897. The school built in 1900 on Sarah Jane Watt's property, across from Terrijoni's, was located on the bank at the first bend in the road coming up the hill from Guffey. Near Terrijoni's house the company store was located. Before the Watt school was built the children either went to Sulphur Springs school or up the **walked** to the old Thompson school in North Huntingdon Township.

Guffey's population was highest in the late 90's when they had three mines operating. 95% of the population came from the Po River valley in northern Italy. One striking thing about this large Italian community was the absence of a church. They did not practice the Catholic religion.



This large Italian immigrant population was troubled with "Black Hands". These Mafia would attempt to extort large sums of money from these immigrants. Once one of the store keepers was threatened and he called the police. After much work, the culprit was caught after he picked up the "dummy" package at Vista station and started to row back across the river. The family still has the black hand note.



This is a picture of Shaner Mine #1 at Guffey in 1917. It is Edith Guardasoni's picture. 1st row, L to R: McKliment, Ada Stewart, Joe Manning, Wm May, 2nd row: John Jackson, Primo Borni, Lou Gim, James Shaffer, Walter Verselozzi, 3rd: Jim Lyons, Chas Fellabaum, Bill Fellabaum, Ducey Gabbie, Nano Comini, Rear: Pete Guardasoni, Paul Guardasoni.

Like most of the other towns, Guffey had its music. They had two brass bands and two string bands at one time.

At one time there were two Italian Brotherhood Halls in Guffey. The oldest one which was established at the turn of a century and is still in existence is located at the foot of the hill. Its first building was a baker shop which they took over when he went bankrupt. The other hall which was built about 1915 across from Covert's no longer exists. The people would go part of the night to one hall and dance and then pass people who would be going to the other hall for the remainder of the night as they changed halls during the night. The present hall is constructed of concrete block. When you mention Guffey to old timers they at once start reminiscing about the good old times they had in Guffey.



This story "A Successful Life" is about the McDonald family who lived on the farm going up Guffey hill. Later Newlin's lived there and now Guardasoni's live there. The old McDonald-Newlin home was destroyed by the tornado on June 23, 1944. Old timers say that 80 years previously a tornado came up this valley. In 1896 the R.M. Scranton Printing Co. published a book entitled "A SUCCESSFUL LIFE" by Mary E. Newlin in which she gave the life history of Rev. Alex W. Newlin. Here are some parts of that book:

" About one hundred fifty years ago, there came from Scotland, with the early settlers of this country two families--one by the name of McGrew and the other by the name of McDonald. Each bought a tract of land from the government, near Guffey's Landing, on the Youghiogheny river, twenty-five miles southeast of Pittsburg. Each built a log house, and on Mr. McGrew's farm was built a fort for protection from the Indians.

One summer after the corn was planted, Mr. McGrew was captured by the Red Men, leaving his wife and one child alone in the wilderness--neighbors being three miles distant. The brave woman went on with the farming, taking her baby with her to the fields, laying it between the rows while she worked and guarding it from snakes and wild beasts with which the country was infested. Still she hoped that her husband would return, but reports came that he had been scalped. The Indians would come to her door and finding her alone would go away and not molest her. Providence protected when dangers were nigh.

The summer passed, the corn ripened, the lonely woman gathered the crop, husked and shelled some of the corn and took it to the nearest mill( six miles distant) and had it ground. She made the trip safely and after reaching home, prepared supper of the new meal. While the mush was boiling, her long lost husband, (the Indian captive) stripped of everything, walked in, only recognized by his voice. A happy hour after their long separation. No doubt they enjoyed that supper.

These early settlers were in danger continually, not knowing what hour the savages might claim their scalps. But they bravely faced the dangers of pioneer life, finally rewarded with peace and prosperity.

The McDonalds attended the Long Run Presbyterian Church, three and one half miles distant. The men carried their guns to church to be ready for an attack by the Indians would they molest them during worship. The floor of the old meeting house was worn in grooves where the guns rested, the farmers holding them between their knees while they listened to the preaching of the Word.

There was a salt lick at the foot of the hill below McDonald's home where deer from the forest came often. With gun in hand he waited for them, carrying home fine venison for the family table. At one time he climbed into a tree, quietly waiting the approach of deer. He heard a rustling in the bushes behind him and looking back, saw a large panther creeping cautiously toward him. When nearly under the tree it stopped, and Mr. McDonald gave it the contents of his gun. It fell; but soon jumped up and ran off yelling frightfully. Mr. McDonald reloaded his gun and followed. Tracked it about a mile when he found it lying dead. It was shot through the body.

At another time, coming home after dark, his way lay through a thick

woods, when he was a short distance from home, he heard a crashing in the bushes, and panther sprang out before him. (This took place down at Guffey) There he lay crouching low on the ground, his ears laid back, and his eyes glowing like fire, only a few feet from Mr. McDonald. The hardy settler was not easily frightened, but this made him tremble. He looked straight into the eyes while he took off his coat, held it before him, ready to throw over the animal's head should it spring upon him. He took his hunter's knife in his right hand and braced himself against the tree, all ready to fight the ferocious animal if need be. He never moved his eyes from the eyes of the panther but stood quietly gazing at it all the night long. At daybreak some noise nearby alarmed the panther and it hastily ran away; with a hideous yell it disappeared, leaving Mr. McDonald safe, weary with watching, and glad to be rid of his company. Mr. McDonald's only son, Alexander, married Livvia Jane Watson and had four children. The third child (named for his father) married Jane Todd, who came from Ireland in 1824; making the journey across the mountains from Philadelphia on foot. Alexander McDonald's eldest daughter, Livvia Jane (born Jan 2, 1830) was like her father spiritually and intellectually. She married Wm C. Newlin (see Dick 'Station) whose grandfather, Nathan Newlin, settled on a farm on the opposite side of the river in 1794. He was a Quaker, but joined the Methodists, built a church on his farm (Allegheny County) which was called by his name. Here his large family were all converted, also his grand and great grand children. The Newlin Church was built in 1824, rebuilt in 1864 when the name was changed to Dravo. (See Shaner history).

Elizabeth McGrew (whose father was captured by the Indians) married Jesse Ong, and her eldest daughter, Jane, married John Newlin. Their son, Wm C. was left fatherless at the age of seven. He learned a trade, taught school and farmed; bought a part of the old McDonald farm where the great grandfather McDonald lies buried. Here was born Margaret Jane, who was three years of age when on April 9, 1856, twin brothers came to the home. But one only lived to bless the world, ALEXANDER WILLIS, the subject of these sketches (Rev. Alex W. Newlin). He was named for his godly grandfather.

He was blessed with unusually good school teachers, for which Sulphur Springs school was noted. Here his father, mother, uncles and aunts received their education. Master Wilson in those early days taught the 3 R's, and Alex Wiley to whom A W Newlin in after years returned thanks for his faithful work in directing his studies. His cousin, Alex W McDonald was his nearest playmate. (One history book tells of John McDonald around 1750 rescuing a tract of land from the wilderness and building a brick house on it around 1767. Frank Maza's house is supposedly the house.) ""

From Rev. Newlin's diary: Dec 10, 1875 "Twenty two penitents were forward at a meeting held in Moore's distillery" (Moore's distillery was in Guffey" **Mrs. Raymond Maloney has the book "A Successful Life"**

\*\*\*\*\*

Guardasoni's live on the old McDonald farm. Then it was the Newlin's. The old house was destroyed by the tornado of June 23, 1944.

See page 618 of Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, published in 1890 for the history of the above McDonald-McGrew marriage and about the Newlins.



The McKeesport Daily News on August 28, 1962 had this to say "The closing of the Guffey mine in 1921 was the beginning of the end for the once flourishing mining community of Guffey because the richness of the coal veins provided life blood for the 50 or more families who called this home. Only six of these families remain. Today--Guffey is almost untouched by the fast pace of modern living. Parts of the old Guffey mine is operated on a small scale."

The following was obtained from the Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, Penna., It is taken from "THE ILLUSTRIOUS LIFE of WILLIAM McKINLEY," by Murat Halstead and published October 1901, shortly after McKinley's assassination: "President McKinley was shot September 6, 1901 by Leon Czolgosz who was born in Detroit, of Polish parents. He had some education but left school to work as a blacksmith's apprentice. Later he moved to Cleveland and then to Chicago where he became interested in the Socialistic movement. Returning to Cleveland he came under the influence of Emma Goldman, one of the leaders of anarchy. (In 1900 Sarah Jane Watt built several houses in Guffey. Her neice and nephew say that Emma Goldman lived in one of the houses for a while and that their aunt did not know of Goldman's activities until later.) At that time there was much trouble in Europe and United States with Anarchists.

Czolgosz was 26 years old when he shot the President. He was preceded in the reception line by an Italian and followed by a negro, James Parker. The boyish featured man of 26 years was a well dressed person, disguised by his accomplices to be accounted a citizen of respectability. The handkerchief was an appeal to sympathy. It was a false pretense of being a crippled person. The short Italian who preceded him leaned backwards against the bandaged hand of his follower. The actions of the Italian attracted the attention of the guards away from the assassin. The man with the bandaged hand and boyish face received no attention.

The actions of the Italian led the police to believe he was an accomplice and to trace the plot to the organization known as Dritto All' Esistenza (Right to Existence). The headquarters of this group was in Patterson, New Jersey. Incidentally, the chief of this Patterson group was a Spaniard. So the anarchist movement was made up of people of many nationalities.

When the President was shot, the negro pounced on the assassin and helped subdue him until the assassin was taken into custody. By doing this he prevented the assassin from firing the third shot at the President. The Italian was never found.

Beginning on page 80 of this book, the following account appears: "There was, on the 8th of September, a celebration of anarchists of the shooting of McKinley--this at McKeesport, Pa. A dispatch dated the 8th said: While all the world is waiting with bowed head and heaving breasts for the latest news from the bedside of the President of the United States, the Guffey's Hollow group of anarchists was celebrating and lauding the act of "Comrade Czolgosz" and was elated at the apparent success of his crime. Guffey's Hollow is a narrow ravine leading back from the B & O Railroad tracks into the Westmoreland County hills. It is about 10 miles east of McKeesport and is the home of one of the largest, if not the largest, regularly organized groups of anarchists in the United States. More than 200 Italian coal miners

are drinking in the doctrines of anarchy there. Until recently the leader of the Guffey's Hollow group was Ciancavilla. He edited an Italian newspaper which was locally known among the English speaking residents as The Firebrand. (The Firebrand was published by Abraham Isaak sr in Chicago. It was suppressed by the postal authorities.)

Ciancavilla found that there was no fortune in editing an anarchist paper in Guffey Hollow and removed to Chicago. Ciancavilla had a big following at Guffey and his paper was read by all the Italian miners. How many of them agreed with him I do not know but certainly a large number as there are several hundred Italians there and they all took his paper. I do not know if Czolgosz was ever at Guffey's Hollow or not. He may have been. They are always holding meetings there and seem to know everything that is going on in that respect.

At the time of King Humbert's ( of Italy) assassination, Ciancavilla and his followers called a meeting in the old school house, where they met and passed a series of resolutions lauding "Comrade Bresci" ( who killed King Humbert) for his "noble act" for the cause of humanity and indorsing the annihilation of kings and rulers. The resolutions were carried to Pittsburgh and published in papers in that city. (Bresci was from Patterson, N.J. Ciancavilla said at that time it would not be long before America would have equal cause to rejoice.)

Newspaper Dispatch Pittsburgh September 17, 1901

"Thirty armed men, imitating the movements of the Ku Klux Klan, raided the anarchists at Guffey's Hollow, Westmoreland Co., on Sunday night and forced twenty five families to take their departure from the town before daylight. The raiders surrounded the houses and terrorized the anarchists by firing Winchesters and revolvers and yelling like Indians.

During the lull in the fusillade one of the anarchists, who could speak English, ventured from his house under a flag of truce and held a parley with the invaders. The result of the conference was that the anarchist agreed to be responsible for the immediate removal of the whole colony. They were to leave the vicinity with their wives, children and all their belongings before daybreak. They kept their contract and before the sun rose every house in the settlement was deserted. The only favor they asked in return for their exodus was that their lives should be spared."



## -HERMINIE-

In November 1892 Mathew and Lindsey from Punxsutawney began drilling to test the coal so as to determine where the shaft should be sunk. They drilled several test holes within a small circle. One was near the Fairgrounds, another was in the vicinity of Newhouse service station, and the third was the place the shaft was sunk. In September 1893 the Berwind White Coal Company began sinking the shaft. About a year later coal was hoisted. The mine shaft was 296 feet deep.



Sinking the mine shaft 1893. Mildred S. Vanatt's picture. The man up highest on the platform is Wm Sittman, her father.

The town was called HERMINIE after Mr. White's wife, Hermine White. At first the spelling Hermine was used, but later usage made it Herminie. For this reason Mrs. White always had a maternalistic outlook for the town and during her life time the mine was kept operating. Also for the same reason Herminie was always a progressive mining town. Almost from the beginning the blocks in Herminie had wood sidewalks. The coal company made its own electricity (later at Herminie #2) before there was any in town and thus the blocks had street lights before other parts of town. When the company supplied electricity to the houses they charged a dollar a month. The company having its own water supply from Howell's dam, supplied fire protection to the blocks and to the town. Also some of the blocks had water in the houses altho it could not be used for drinking. A private telephone service connected the officials of the mine and certain people on the other side of the street. They were magneto type phones where you cranked so many long and so many short rings to contact your party. Many accidents occurred during the time the shaft was being sunk, as there was much blasting. Many of the wounded were tended by the women of the town, there being no doctor. Dr. Patterson later came to town and was located at the corner of Pike St. and Sewickley Avenue, across from the hotel. Dr. W.J. Latimore, who was born in Sewickley Township at Armstrong Station came to Herminie in 1902.

He practiced medicine here until he died in 1944.



The first store (Marsh) and the four room school were built in 1894. previously the only two buildings here were the Thomas Tilbrook farm house which is now the Commercial Hotel and Tinsman farm house at the foot of Pike Street which is Harenski's. Both houses still being used.



This was the old Marsh store on Pike Street and West Newton Road.





This is a picture of the Tilibrook farm house today



This is the Tinstman farm house today. It is used as a dwelling.

The Ocean Coal Company took over the operation of the mine from the Berwind White Mining Company. The mines needed a supply of water for their boilers. A dam was built across the creek valley in Limerick Hill. The dam was about 28 ft deep at its breast which was near the bend of the present road at the old Fury house. Charles Bolton built an ice house across the road from where Hugh Smith now lives. He cut ice from the dam in the winter to supply his butcher shop which was located where the present Bell Telephone exchange is built. When Edna #2 mine opened in February 1903 the sulphur

water later into the creek which caused the dam to be useless for boiler water. The coal company then built the present dam at Howell's which is the source of Herminie's water supply now.



There was a dam near the present bridge at the foot of Limerick Hill. There being no bridge there, the creek was forded and the road way went up along the side of th hill, coming out at the old Fury house. The Eureka Store cut ice on this dam and had an ice house so as to supply its store with ice. The pumping of sulphur from Keystone mine stopped this project.

In 1904, ten years after the mine was sunk, Ocean Coal Company had 272 employees, worked 267 days, and produced 287,663 tons of coal. This included Herminie #2 which was just beginning to produce.

The Jeannette News Dispatch of March 27,1937 carried this item:"Officials of Ocean Coal Co.,Herminie, which is due to shut down soon because of excess-ive water, announced that work will be provided in Windber mine for as many of the 500 miners who want to work there. The mines closed in February 1938. None of the miners went to Windber.

The first auto in Herminie was owned by the coal company. It was a Chalmers. They had it during the 1910 strike. When the strike was over they hired John Herbert to be their chauffeur. John Creighton, the hotel keeper, got the second auto and Mutz Solomon was his chauffeur after working hours.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike was built over the right of way of the old South Penn Railroad. The railroad laid out the road and built tunnels which the turnpike used. When you ride over the turnpike, do you ever think that had the railroad been completed; it would have gone thru Herminie and part of Sewickley Township?

The South Penn Railroad was incorporated April 1,1863 to build a railroad from Chambersburg to Pittsburg. It was called "Andrew Carnegie's Dream". It was financed by the Vanderbilts. The turnpike followed their right of way



over much of its length. The South Penn RR graded their right of way from Cowansburg to Pike Street in Herminie on the Pittsburg end. It was to be built from Cowansburg; go below Badanjak's house in Herminie (grading still visible), out West Newton road and up Church Street at the rear of John J. Wilson's home. The project was abandoned November 11, 1884 and much of the right of way bought by the Pennsylvania Railroad. So had the project been completed, the railroad would have gone out Church Street towards Arona. This grading of the right of way on the easter end and the building of the tunnels was a deciding factor in getting the U S Government to help finance the building of the turnpike which might have gone thru the township.

The coming of the coal company in 1894 caused the Pennsylvania Railroad to extend its line from the mines in the Darragh region. The line was extended down past the coal mine and west of Pike Street so as to give the trains enough room to remove the coal from the mine sidings. The trains came down from Greensburg twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon to haul passengers. Before passengers trains were started, the passengers rode in the caboose. They had to back-up toward Greensburg. In about 1900 the tracks were extended to Cowansburg to meet the Youghiogheny branch. A short distance below Pike street they followed the old South Penn right of way to Cowansburg. As passenger business fell off, less trains were operated until at last there was a trip in the morning and one at night made by a deisel train with engine and coach combined. Finally in 1928 passenger service was stopped. Boxcars are now unloaded at Herminie but no freight service is available.

Where the public road crosses the railroad at Keystone there was a railroad junction called Andrews Runn Junction. Here the trains went up a spur to Herminie #2 and Edna #2.

The township has been served well by many doctors. But the two "old faithful" have been Dr. W.J. Latimore who practiced until his death in 1944 and Dr. H.L. Highberger who started to practice in Madison in 1910 and is still going strong today. The township at present is also served faithfully by Dr. A J Cerne, Herminie; Dr. Peairs of Sutersville, Dr. George Toth of Yukon and Dr. J B Laughrey, Sutersville, who came to Rillton in 1910 strike when Dr. Chapman took a vacation because of some alleged strike trouble. All these men, and many others, have done their part for the betterment of the communities in medical, social, and civic ways. It is hard to evalutate their good because so much of it is done without any fanfare.

When you talk to the old timers about doctors, most of them will bring up the name of Dr. John Milligan who was born near Madison in 1851. He lived to be 101 years old and attended most of the births in the early days. Other doctors have come and gone, each doing his part while sojourning here.

Did you ever read Herminie's newspaper: THE HERMINIE NEWS? It was published for a short while in 1915 by J C Schroyer, West Newton, Pa. who came here interested in the undertaking business. His father was an undertaker in West Newton. After a fling at politics, Schroyer left and now lives in Florida.

Speaking of undertakers: it was not as proffessional then as now. The undertaking business was conducted by men who operated livery stables. The livery stable operators had the horses, hearses, and carriages to haul the corpse and mourners. They were a sort of "deputy" undertakers working under

some licensed undertaker in a nearby town. By procuring the services of the licensed undertaker, they in turn furnished the carriages and horses. James Crosby had an undertaking and livery business for a while, until he sold it in 1904 to Albert Clark Hansel. Wm J. Rummel and Hansel operated a stable for a while as did John Kretchek, who had his establishment on fourth street. Rummel & Hansel's building what is now the rear part and apartment of the Herminie Motor Company building.



(Annie Crosby Good Picture)

Many of the skilled laborers in the new mine at Herminie, and surrounding mines, were customers of Wm F Schribler's store in Greensburg. The company store in Herminie had not been built. So Harry Scheiber, son of the owner, would make deliveries of groceries to people in Herminie and both Madisons every two weeks. One of his Madison customers was Dr. Sloan. He would leave early in the morning and return to Greensburg late at night. When making deliveries, the orders for the deliveries two week hence would be taken. This continued until the early 1900's according to Harry Scheibler.

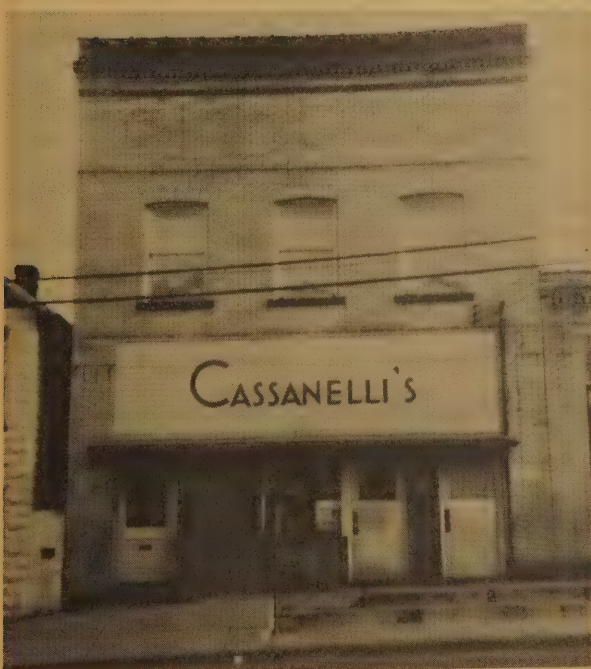
James Marsh built the first store in Herminie in 1894. Charles Dailey was the post master when Hermine (original spelling) got its first postoffice in this building. The post office was then moved to the building on Pike St. where Candido Plassio owns. Kate and Edna Tinstman worked there. When Charles Bolton became postmaster in 1902 he moved the office to a building beside his butcher shop; which was located on Sewickley Avenue where the telephone exchange is located. (This post office building was put on skids and hauled to another part of town by horses pulling it. Ann Fennell now lives in the house) When the Eureka Store was built on the corner of Church and Fifth streets (where Leo Caviggia has his barber shop), a building on the west side of the store served as the post office. Mrs. Mildred Sittman Vanatt tells me there was a boardwalk from the store to the office. She was bookkeeper at the store. When the store and post office burnt in 1911, the office was moved across the street into a house until the yellow brick building on Sewickley Avenue was built when the store was moved to Sewickley Avenue location. A barber shop is now in the old post office building.





Eureka Store 1906. Mildred Vanatt picture. L to R: Simon Parell, W Cowan, Oscar Kettering, Mildred Sittman (vanatt), Mrs Kennedy, Mr. Kennedy, Mary Socklege, Ed McAnninch.

The yellow brick building built on Sewickley Avenue to house the new store burnt in 1919. The post office did not burn. This old brick building served as a dance hall, apartments above the store, and as a temporary school when the wooden school burnt in the fall of 1917. The present Eureka Store is built on part of the old foundation. In 1951 the post office was moved to its present location in the Cassanelli building which was built in 1916 by Louis Averback. It now serves about 725 families. After trying many years, home delivery of mail started September 29, 1962.



In 1897 Louis Morrison came to Herminie from Coulterville and opened a store. In 1916 he started a second shoe and clothing store in the building where Kavel has a pharmacy on Sewickley Avenue.

Besides Marsh, some of the early store keepers in Herminie were: Angelo Taraborelli who had a grocery store where Albert Raffaelli now has a tavern; Frank Vassia who had a grocery store at the corner of Sewickley Avenue and sixth street; N. Brock and Son who built a store in 1903 in the middle of the second block on Sewickley Avenue, and Cobetto and Shofinosky who had grocery stores in the middle of the fourth block on Sewickley Avenue. Most of these men worked in the mines along with having stores. They did a big business in supply the miners with food and miners' supplies. In the early 1900's there was a butcher shop where the bank now stands. At the rear of the shop, along the alley, was a slaughter house and cattle pen. About 1906 the slaughter-house was made into dwellings. A J Skrabski later operated the butcher shop and store at the corner of Sewickley Avenue and Fourth St before the building was moved back. He continued to operate the store there for years.

In 1894 Irvin Henry built a blacksmith shop on Pike Street where C.T. Mayers has his appliance store. In 1897 he built the house on West Newton road. After World War I the shop was moved across the road from the house and a garage built on the shop site. At Mr. Henry's death Charles Vanatt took over the blacksmith shop. The shop was moved into the garage. When business declined Mr. Vanatt operated the shop at his home until his death. Now a blacksmith cannot be found. This year the county had to buy a forge so as to sharpen their own tools.

In March 1911 S.L. Donaldson started erecting a drug store on Sewickley Avenue and Second Street. Previously McDonald was in the building across from the fire house where Elmer Peters lives.

When Herminie had its bands, a band hall was built near where the Greek Church now stands. Here the band gave concerts and operas were given, some times by the Italian immigrants of Guffey. The building was moved to its present location when the Greek Church was built in 1913. There was a band platform about 16 feet square on the same lot, along Sewickley Avenue. It served as a platform for doings held on the lot. Sometimes a band performed on it. When the school burnt in 1917, the building was used as a school. In the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918 it was the "hospital" for the more serious cases and those who had no one at home to care for them. It was called the "pest" house. Whole families became ill at one time. People wore pieces of garlic in a bag around their neck to "ward off" the flu bug. Later the Methodist Church used the building as a church. When the church disbanded it was sold and is now used as John's Plumbing Shop.

The township has been plagued with at least two long strikes: the one for 18 months in the 1909-10 period and the other in 1922. In the 1910 strike the blocks in Herminie started on Sewickley Avenue next to the site of the old brick post office and continued east to 7th street. From Second Street (the car line) to where the old post office was built and down to Church street was the mule field. At one time the stable stood where Hilary Stader now lives on Third street. The blocks on Church street started at Third Street (House No. 1 in the coal company numbering) and continued east to the railroad tracks.



There were no houses on the north side of Church Street. These blocks and the mule field were inclosed by a board fence about 10 feet high. One side of the fence was from Second Street out Sewickley Avenue to Seventh Street and both ends of the enclosure went to the railroad tracks. There were board walks in front of all the blocks, a rarity for a coal mining town. The opening for the fence was on Sewickley Avenue at Fifth Street. The strike breakers were brought into Herminie by train and street car. Most of them were negroes who had never seen a mine before. In the 1922 strike a large wooden building was built in Boltontown on the old ball field where Anthony Wilps now lives. Here the strikers who had been evicted from the blocks lived. The meals were cooked in a kitchen building. A well was dug to supply water.



Sewickley Avenue in Herminie, generally referred to as Main Street, has had a varied history. When the town was first established, the road from Fifth Street to Seventh Street was a double street: the southside was higher than the north side (block side) of the street. Thus the roadway had two levels. In the early 1900's this was remedied when it was graded to one level. There was a big dip in the road at Third Street. At times the mud on the street was so deep that horses pulling carriages had to have work horses help them pull the carriages thru the mud, especially between Third and Fourth Streets.

In 1922 there was mud everywhere. In that year the Sewickley Township Supervisors let a contract to Cunningham to build a cement road from the township line at Rillton to the top of the school hill at Batis's. (The county later took over this road) There was mud at each end of the cement road for a long time. One day some of the powers that be were setting on the porch of the Commercial Hotel watching the horses and auto trying to get thru the mud. Some one had bright idea to let the contractor build a road from Pike Street to the end of town at seventh street. So Herminie got a cement road just like that. Later the county put a 5 ft curb on the business side of the street; then later when it was a state road the state put guard posts on the other side.



Sewickley Avenue about 1912. Alfred Holmquist picture. Taken from Pike St.

From the Republican Standard of March 20, 1931: "According to the new road map, Herminie will be greatly benefited. Motorist will be able to get out of town on improved highways by all the roads that are now dirt.

Bids in excess of \$100,000 have been let to give Herminie a new road in the spring of 1963.



Sewickley Avenue from Pike Street 35 yrs later. Rouse's picture



In the early 1900's Charles Bolton had a red brick slaughterhouse at the foot of Pike Street. He had a dam on the creek and cut ice from it for his butcher shop. Thus this part of Sewickley Creek was used to operate a saw mill earlier, supply ice, and used by the United Brethren Church for baptisms.

Outside of Herminie, across the road from Crabapple Lake, Struble's had a cider press. The map of 1876 shows the establishment. The 1876 atlas says that Israel Struble operated it. It manufactured cider and vinegar in a plant that was 16 ft by 40 ft. It had two presses and produced about 60 barrels a year. Later it was operated by Lem Struble. In the late summer apple growers would come with large loads of apples and wait their turn to have their barrels filled with cider. The young ones of the community had their fill of free cider.

The first "Nickelodeum" or moving picture was operated in 1908 by Jack Andrews, an electrician for the Ocean Coal Company. It was in the building next to the present Laundromat; now the Marn building. The electricity was obtained by stretching wires across the street from the company side. A victrola or phonograph played music to accompany the picture on the screen. There were three different shows a week, each costing a nickle to see. It was in operation until about 1914. Then about that time John Erskine and Mr. McGivern had movies in the building next to the present Rouse drug store where the Villa Theatre was later. The victrolas passed from the scene when the movie companies started to send sheet music to be played with their pictures. A piano player was hired to play the music. Then the player piano with rolls was introduced to take the place of the piano player. (They had automation even in those days.) Some player pianos, when they were electrified, had attachments which made music to resemble a large orchestra. These instruments were played by air manufactured by the piano and timed by the rolls on the piano. Then talkies came to town in 1928. Al Jolson in The Jazz Singer singing Sonny Boy was the big hit of the day. In some of the early talking pictures, being that the popular star could not sing, the music was dubbed in to make it appear the actors were doing the singing when all the time it was some one else's voice. Before the sound was placed on the side of the film, records were used for the voice and sound effects which were timed with the film. Some times one scene would be on the screen and sound would be for some other scene, particularly if the film would break and the projectionist would not insert the correct number of blank frames in the film to replace the broken film.

In the early 1920's Herminie had two full time operating movie houses: the Casino, built around 1910 and operated by Margaret Brock and located where the present Central theatre building is; and the Villa, operated by James Villa in the building next to Rouse's. The old Casino burnt down in 1923 and was rebuilt in 1924. It was called the Casino because of the alleged gambling activities. Villa bought the Casino and changed the name to Villa when he closed his theatre. Later Lorenzo Covi bought the theatre. Charles Trozzo then bought it from Rudolph Covi and changed the name to Central. The place has been closed for several years due to competition from television.

Before the coming of electricity, some people who had better incomes, used natural gas to light their homes; but still cooked with coal fires. Gas heating stoves and cooking stoves were a rarity. The Robert Albright property, where Kuklish's now lives, and the Wineland property where Joe Bailey lives, both on the Irwin Herminie Road, had gas wells which supplied gas for lighting their homes. The mines took the Albright gas, but the well at Bailey's burned for a long time after it was no longer used to the house. The wells were drilled for water, but gas was struck. The majority of the houses used kerosen lamps for lighting purposes: carrying the lamp from one room to another as needed; and using a kerosene lantern to make the trip to the little house at the rear of the lot and to do outside chores. Before electricity became so prevalent and available, some bought their own power plants that made 32 volt electricity. The generator was operated by a gasoline motor or a windmill was used to charge the batteries. The batteries were charged-up during the day so that a lamp could burn for a while at evening tide. Most of the first radios in the early twenties, after galena sets, were operated by batteries. There were regular battery shops to repair and charge these batteries and auto batteries. Some of the batteries were dry cell type.

Generally the only heat in the house was the large kitchen stove which burnt either coal or wood. ( We are speaking of conditions as late as 35 years ago.) Some households had grates in the rooms which gave an enticing light from the burning logs; but your body roasted on one side and froze on the other. Surprising enough, even tho many houses had gas for lighting purposes; they did not take to gas for cooking until much later. Possibly because the coal miners feared the wrath of the companies which hired them; or because they did business with the coal miners and did not want to offend any body.

The coal strikes at the end of World War II started people to using natural gas for heating their homes and businesses. This was hastened by the depletion of the coal mines. Now in 1962 the electric companies are trying to sell the people the idea of using electricity for doing every thing around the house, including heating. The competing advertisments for heating purposes between the elctrical and gas companies are something to read. "Heat by wire, not by fire." A few homes in the township are now heated by electricity and are all electric homes.

Herminie at one time had a Catholic church for the Polish people. It was built in about 1916 on Madison Avenue across the street from Anthony Paul's. After a few years it mysteriously caught fire and burned down. It was a beautiful yellow brick building. The Polish people also started a cemetery of their own out in the vicinity between the Catholic school and the Wineland cemetery. Around 1910 they had music to accompany the corpse as shown by the band picture under Music section.





'Supervisors'  
Office  
at  
ball field



Jail. Not in  
use. In alley  
at rear of  
Stefanon's



. Herminie 1908  
(Francis T.  
Campfield's  
picture)

# SEWICKLEY TWP. HONOR ROLL

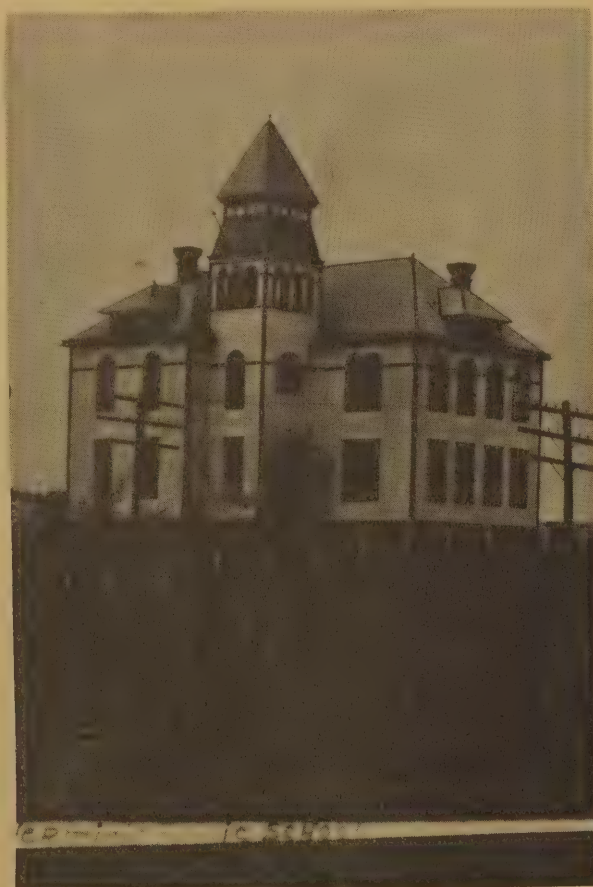
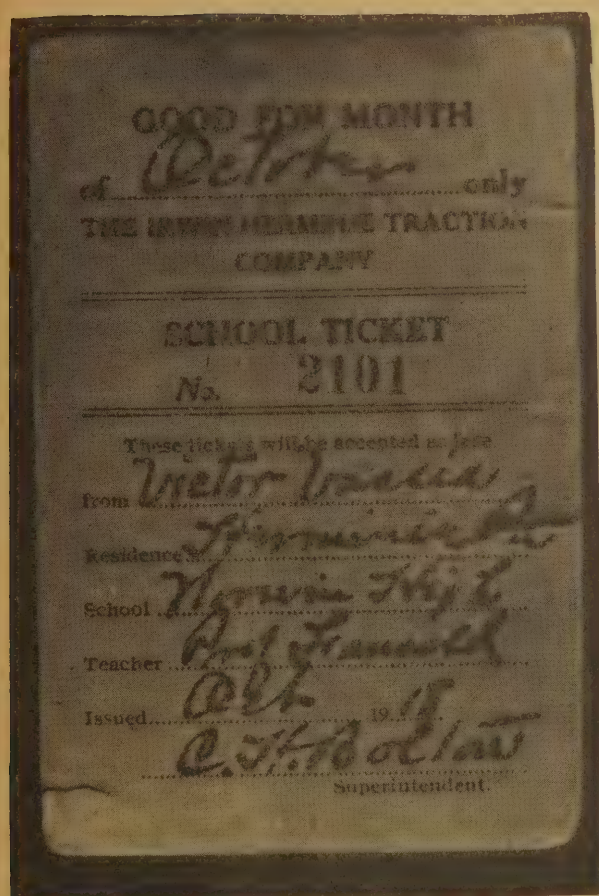
A sepia-toned photograph of the World War Memorial in Hermine, PD. The monument features a central tower with an eagle sculpture on top, flanked by two smaller structures. The text "WORLD WAR MEMORIAL" and "HERMINE, PD." is visible at the bottom left.

car line  
(Harry Critch-  
fields picture)





Welcome Home after World War I. John B. Seneff's picture



First four room school  
 (Harry Critchfield's picture)

## St MARY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The St Mary Byzantine Catholic Church was built in 1913 on the site of the old base ball field. Part of this site was occupied by the "Band Hall." The band hall was moved over a distance to make room for the church building and is now John's Plumbing Shop after an interesting history.

After the church was built, it had a very difficult time due to alleged financial and legal troubles. Finally the red brick church was "locked up" due to these alleged troubles. The congregation bought the old Marsh property on Pike Street and West Newton Road in 1923. The church used the first floor for services and the upper floor was the parish house for the priest.

On sunday, September 23, 1930, the red brick church was rededicated. The Bishop and several priests took part in the procession. The priests and the congregation paraded up town, out town, and back to the church accompanied by The Herminie Firemen's Band. After the ceremony, the priests ate at Harenski's Hotel, corner of Sewickley Avenue and Pike Street, and the lay people ate at the old church and in the basement of the brick church.

On May 29, 1952 the church was broken into and \$100 was stolen from the candle alter.

A few years ago the church came under the Pope of Rome and adopted that calendar. This caused a schism. The older people left the church and went to the church in Scottdale, Pa. A parish house for the priest has been added to the church and much remodeling has been done. The young people appear to be more active in the affairs of the church.





## -CRABAPPLE LAKE PARK-

Crabapple Lake Community Park and Pool is located on the Herminie- West Newton Road and is available to all the residents of the township. It is located on ground once owned by Hannah Struble. Across the road from the lake is where Struble's had an apple cider mill. The park embraces 22 acres of land which includes a swimming pool, fishing lake, Little League baseball field, pavillion, and a large wooded picnic area. There are parking places available for 500 autos. It was first begun in 1956 by the Herminie Lions. Much labor, machinery use and articles were donated by interested parties. With the donation of ten fire places and 26 tables by individual buyers, and a 30 ft by 50 ft concrete floor pavillion with its open fire place; the park furnishes very good accomodations for picnickers.

The Crabapple Lake Community Park Pool was started in June 1961. It was opened on August 6, 1961. It was dedicated on September 4, 1961. There is no charge for the use of the park. Those who ant to use the pool can become a member by paying \$150 and then a fee each year for maintenance. The fee for 1962 is \$30. This fee covers all the members of the household. Individual admissions can be paid to use the pool.

The pool has done much to prevent juvenile delinquency. It provides a place for the teenagers of both sexes to intermingle under proper supervision and at the same time gives the young ones a place to spend their time.



-WINELAND METHODIST CHURCH-

The Methodist Church at the Wineland Cemetery was erected in 1867. Its location is shown on the Atlas of 1867. The ground for the church and cemetery were donated from the Benjamin Wineland farm to the congregation.

Services were held at this site until 1919 when the congregation began to hold services at the present Jr.O.U.A.M. Hall due to the conditions of the roads to the cemetery. A short time later the congregation moved to the Eureka Store Hall which was above the first Eureka Store built on the present site on Sewickley Avenue. This Eureka Store (company store) burned in 1919 and along with it some of the old church records.

Before the church was built over in the Weineland Cemetery, services were held in a log house which stood across the road at the fork of the lot where the road now going past the rear of Crabapple Lake crossed the road going toward West Newton. Later this log house was a dwelling.

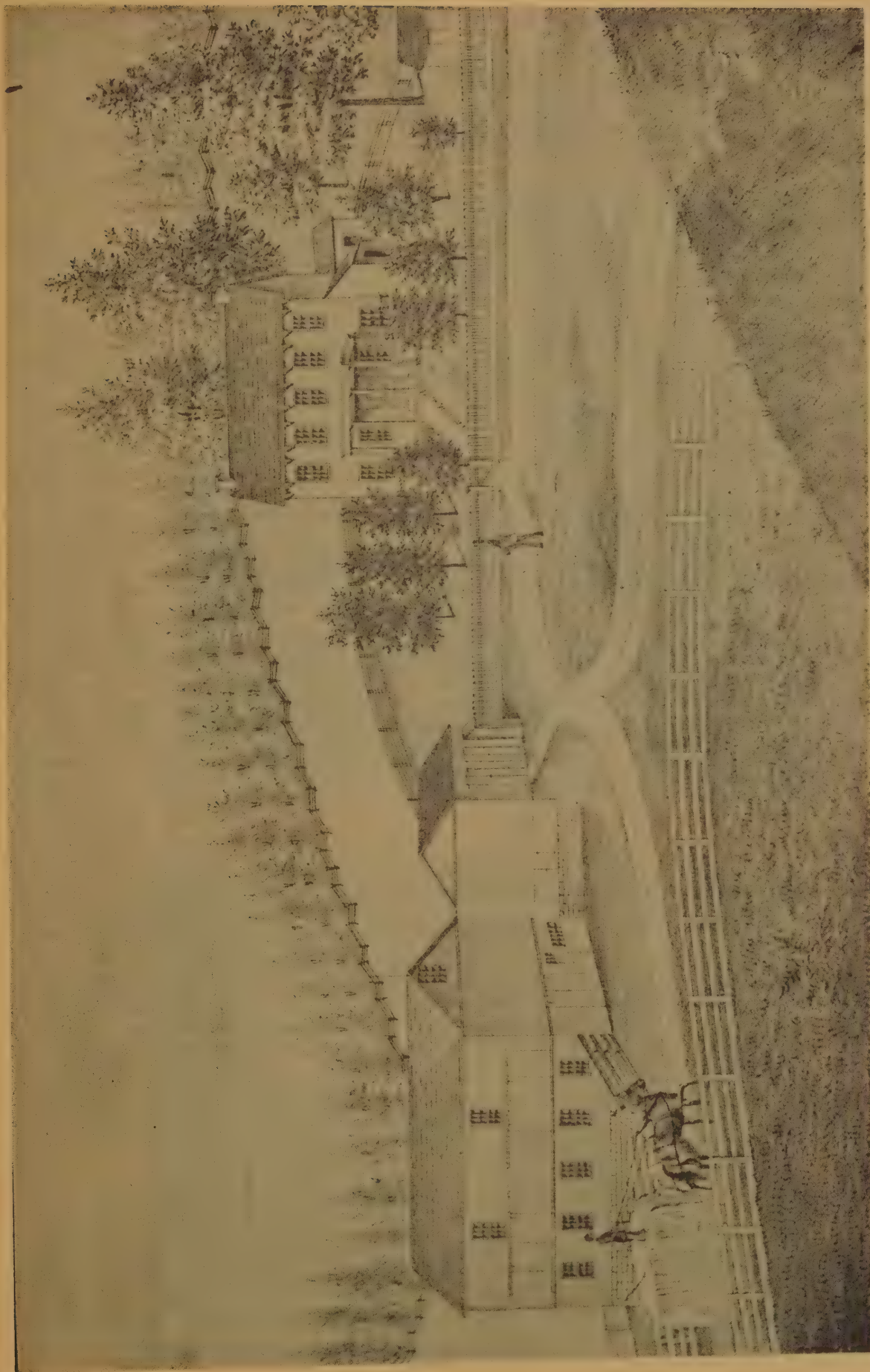
The congregation began holding services at the present John's Plumbing Shop, located at the rear of the Greek Church, in 1919. Services were discontinued in 1944 and building sold to the present owners in 1949. The church building at the Wineland Cemetery was sold to John Felgar in 1921 and dismantled.

When church was held at Wineland's, there were two entrances: one for the men and the other for the women. The sexes did not sit together in the pew. The pew had a divider where the men sat on one side of the divider and the women sat on the other. This was also a common practice in the old United Brethren Church at Mars Hill.



Mrs Frank Elliot's picture of Wineland Church





From the Atlas of 1876. House was built in 1821. Ilich's now live here.

-EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH -

Herminie, Pa..



· L. Ward Mock, Jeannette took this picture. He also made the copies and prints of the old pictures appearing in this book. June 1962

Earlier history associates the United Brethrens and Mars Hill Baptists who held church in the old Mars Hill Church which was located on the ground donated by Anna Tilbrook. Altho it was originally granted for Baptist Denomination purposes only, the Baptists consented to let the United Brethrens, who had been attending the community church held services in the afternoon, use the church. This group called themselves the Mars Hill United Brethrens. However, it was not until 1851 that records reveal the organization of a United Brethren Society in the Mars Hill Meeting House.

The members had in mind to build, so in 1894 subscriptions were started for a new church in the town of Herminie where the Ocean Coal Company had come and sunk a shaft and built dwellings. The June 4, 1894 minutes of the Mars Hill United Brethren Society records that "the lot 100' by 125' on the east side of the Mt Pleasant-Pittsburg Pike, donated by the Tinstman heirs and recommended by the Committee on location for erecting thereon a United Brethren Church." The church and furnishings costs approximately \$3,500. The new church was dedicated, debt free, January 6, 1895.



The only lighting was an oil chandelier which often made an attempt to blow-up, if neglected. Until a parsonage was built in 1907, the ministers lived where housing was available. In 1916 the basement of the church was excavated. The Irwin-Herminie Traction Co. put a spur track over to the church to haul the dirt away.

The beautiful pipe organ with chimes was installed and dedicated April 29, 1944. The church burnt Sunday morning February 11, 1945. The parsonage did not burn. The pipe organ was a total loss. Following the fire, services were held in the Sewickley Township High School Auditorium.

Upon action of the Board of Trustees, an application for a church charter was presented to the Court of Common Pleas June 1, 1945. The charter was granted and recorded June 27, 1945 by Judge Richard D. Laird, and bears the inscription "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ of Herminie, Pennsylvania" which henceforth officially designated the title of the congregation.

On January 20, 1946 it was voted to merge the two denominations: The Church of the United Brethren in Christ and The Evangelical Church.

The new church building was formally dedicated on Sunday, May 19, 1946.

In June 1962 a monument of an open bible constructed by funds willed by Mrs. Bertha Gressman was completed in front of the church.

In the early days of the church, the water in Sewickley Creek, near the present bridge at the foot of Pike Street, was clear and deep. The church used this place to immerse its members being baptized. The coming of the mines and the resulting sulphur water stopped the practice.



-SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY No. 1-

Herminie is not a big town, but its people have big hearts. This fact was evidenced the morning following the fire that made a near total loss of the Morrison Department Store on Sewickley Avenue in 1926. The morning following the fire two volunteers, Jas N. White, bank cashier and C W Perry, Clerk of Ocean Coal Company, solicited the business people of the community and came up with enough money to warrant the calling of a meeting of the men of the community to discuss the organizing of the first volunteer fire company in the township.

The first meeting to organize was held September 26, 1926. On November 23, 1926 various committees were announced by President A.T. Evans. After viewing and having demonstrated several types of trucks and equipment, they had delivered to Herminie a new Seagrave pumper and equipment on December 28, 1926.

On January 23, 1927 the company adopted its constitution and bylaws. Charles T Mayers Sr was elected first fire chief. On September 7, 1927 the company was duly chartered and a certificate of incorporation granted.

The next step of progress was the acceptance of a lease to the ground of the Ocean Coal Co. on October 26, 1927; and to make preparations to construct a suitable building for the purposes of the fire company. The building was ready for occupancy in December 1927. The building has been used continually as a community building for the township where civic and other organizations meet and hold social functions. It was a two story affair with a full basement.



During the depression years it was the dispensing center of food and clothing. During the giving of Surplus Food now by the federal government, it is again the dispensing center. When the mines closed Greensburg sent a man down here to have the men sign-up for unemployment compensation. In 1959 the top story was taken off and the building made bigger by the addition of a large room to the east side of the old building.





All members serving continuously for 25 years and those who contributed \$100 or more at one time are given life memberships. The company has held three banquets to honor 25 year members.

Prior to the organization of this fire company the only fire protection was that afforded by the Ocean Coal Company. They had their own water supply at Howell's Dam and had eight fire plugs scattered thruout their holdings. There was no fire protection on the business side of the street. The coal company had a hose cart which was pulled by men to the fire plug nearest the fire. Large fires caused the Irwin and/or Greensburg fire companies to be called who had to couple their trucks to the coal company hydrants. The school was serviced by the plug on second street at the end of the car line. Such was the water supply until the W P A extended the water lines in 1940's.

On July 1, 1927 the first fireman's band was organized and they did great honors with the many trophies they won.

The 21st annual convention of the Westmoreland County Firemen's Association was held in Herminie the week of June 4, 1956 in conjunction with the 30th anniversary of the company. The name of the company was changed from Herminie Volunteer Fire Company to Sewickley Township Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 due the other fire companies being organized in the township.

A Ladies Auxilary was organized in 1961 and has been very active in helping raise money for the fire company. At present it has about 60 members.

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Because of war conditions, towns were requested to have their names painted in large letters on roofs to aid airplanes locate airports without using radio to give-away their positions. On the roof of Herminie Motor Co. HERMINIE was painted and on the roof of Michael Smith's garage a large arrow pointing towards the Pittsburgh Airport was painted. In Rillton, the name was painted on Painter's barn roof.

## -HUTCHINSON-



HUTCHINSON was named after the president of the Westmoreland Coal Company. The town was built on the farms of Sherrick Fulmer and David Kelley. The mine had many explosions during its construction and many times afterwards. The first coal was loaded June 22, 1925. The shaft is 258 feet deep. The slope is 865 feet long. Materials are sent into the mine via the slope. Men walk to work by going down the slope; but ride up the slope coming out of the mine. During the time Westmoreland Coal Company operated the mine it produced 14,201,952 tons of coal. Much of the information about the Penn Gas Coal Company and the Westmoreland Coal Company was supplied by Jack J Collier, manager of the mines, and George T. Lewis, engineer for the Westmoreland Coal Company.

The Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company took over the mine in 1957 and is operating it now. It is the only large mine in the township today. Today about 100 men work there. At one time it employed about 350 men. There are several small mines called "country mines" around in the township. They produce house coal during the winter months.

When the town was first established, the store served as the post office. The mail was brought to the store by the store manager. He gave it out as a favor to the people. For a while the mail came thru the Herminie post office and the Rillton post office.

On October 1, 1946 the post office was regularly established in the store and the store manager became a bona fide postmaster. In August 1953 Mrs John Steadman was appointed and she took the office to her home where it is now located.





The Store is now operated by Adolph Baloh



Hutchinson was the only mine in the township not to use steam. It was all electric from the beginning. When the coal company laid out the town it was not a "coal company town". Individual houses were erected on large size lots. Shade trees were planted. The "blocks" idea was not apparent. This foresight was beneficial to all concerned when the company sold the houses to its employees later.

The school at Hutchinson was named Cameron after the General Superintendent of the Westmoreland Coal Company when the school was built in 1927.



Hutchinson a few years ago organized a fire company. They are making great strides to take their place in the community. The women of the town are doing their part to help the men pay off the obligations incurred in getting a fire house and a fire truck.



The town has always been plagued with no water supply. Large sums of money have been spent by the people to drill wells and construct cisterns. Even tho the Municipal Water Company's line is only a mile away, the people hesitate to get organized and bring the water into the town. Possibly because of the vast expense they already have had getting water.





### The Honor Roll

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#### THE SEWICKLEY UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (Old Dick Church)

When this section of Pennsylvania was opened for settlement in 1770 some Scotch Irish Covenanters and Seceder families were among the early arrivals. The first mention of record is a petition from a Sewickley group to the Associate Presbytery for the service of a minister in the minutes of 1776. In 1780 they were sending representatives to the meetings as "Correspondents." In 1782 they joined in taking subscriptions in view of settling a minister as pastor. Later the same year they pledged 40 pounds as salary for 1/4 time, with Redstone 1/4 and Forks of the Yough 1/2, in a call to Rev. Mathew Lind, but the call was not accepted. Unable to secure a pastor it seems from many references to a Union Meeting House that they must have shared the ministry of the pastor of the Presbyterians Rev. James Powers from 1779 to 1787 when that relationship was disrupted over the selection of a site for a new church building. Continuing under difficulties with what ministry could be obtained they persisted until organized as an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Congregation under Monongahela Presbytery, they secured the Rev. Mungo Dick as their first pastor in 1806. He was pastor until 1836.

The "Tent" was the first meeting place here as in those days for most religious groups; it was an outdoor arrangement with a platform for the minister and logs for pews arranged before it. The first building was of logs with a dirt floor and only such refinements as axes could shape. In 1807 another log building was erected of more pretentious size and appointments, but little authentic account has been preserved concerning it. In 1832 a brick building was erected a little distance to the rear of the present structure. It conformed to the style of churches of the day with two front and two side doors, with broad aisles separating the wall side seats from

the double width seats in the middle partition down the center. There was also the "amen" corner pews and the high pulpit between. This building served with some repairing and remodeling for fifty years. In 1882 the present building was erected at a cost of \$3000. The congregation had depleted in membership by the loss to West Newton in 1850 and to Madison in 1860 and the consequent limiting of its field. Some questioned the wisdom of continuing, but love for "Old Sewickley" prevailed.

The Sewickley Union Cemetery Association takes care of the burial ground and is chartered as such. It is reputed that the cemetery has the grave of a girl slain and scalped in the Indian uprising of 1782. There are a notable number of graves of soldiers of the Revolution in this burial ground.

On Sunday, August 20, 1950 it commemorated the 170th year of its Founding and the 145th year of its Organization as a congregation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, according to the pamphlet from which the above was taken.

In 1953 it celebrated the 100 years that the Bible on the pulpit has been in use.



"The Brick Church"



-KEYSTONE-



( N.B.Copeland picture )

They started to sink the mine shaft at KEYSTONE in the summer of 1902. It was sunk on the James Weddell farm by the Keystone Coal and Coke Company which was organized that year from several other companies. The farm house is occupied today by Wm Thomas. The shaft was 312 feet deep. It was finished in September 1903. John E. Maguire started as a water boy at 75¢ a day when the mine was starting. Altho he worked other places in the meantime, he was working at Keystone when it closed May 1938.



The old road going thru Keystone. The building on the left is the old school house; site of the present recreation area. Anne Mitchell picture.





Hoisting the smoke stacks. The man on the mule is Louis Prejza.

The center of the town's activities was the "Hall." It was built in 1910 and torn down in 1938. It served for almost any purpose you can mention. During World War I it was the center of Red Cross activities. During the flu epidemic of 1918 it was the "Mess Hall." Whole families were down at one time, and parents could not feed the children. The food was prepared in the hall and taken around and the sick people fed. Basket Ball games, boxing, dances, plays, moving pictures and school were held in this hall.

When Keystone opened, it had hard time getting water for its boilers. it filtered some water out of the creek but the water caused foam in the boilers and was not satisfactory. At times tanks of water came in by train to fill the water tanks for the mine. Some times at night they would "borrow" some water from the Ocean Coal Company's dam on Limerick Hill. Finally they laid a water line from Keystone to the Madison reservoir (Darragh). When Keystone got their water bill from the Madison mine they were furious. Superintendent McKnight had his men calculate the amount of water that was coming into Keystone mine from the Madison mine. He sent Madison a bill for pumping this water. That settled the question. The line is still laying but not in use.

The Keystone Coal and Coke Company gave prizes each year to the family that had the best garden and also to the family that had the tideiest premise.





Keystone's "Main Street" about 1906. Anne Mitchell picture .

When the mine first started, the bottom cager wanted to show his girl, later his wife, what it was like in the mine. Part way down the hoisting engineer stopped the cage and sent word that it was broken. After leaving them "sweat it out" for a while he lowered the cage to the bottom.

At the present time the town gets its water from a well on the old coal company farm. It is pumped up into tanks and distributed by water lines to the houses and fire plugs. They also have a stand-by connection with the Herminie Water District in case of trouble or water shortage.

In April 1855 there was ice across the creek where the creek was forded at the present railroad bridge. People walked across the creek on the ice.

Keystone, like most of the mining towns, had street lights in the blocks before the public roads. The houses in the blocks were using kerosene for lighting purposes. The coal company made its own electricity. The only houses that had electricity was the "bosses row." About 1922 the West Penn Power Company took over the job of supplying the mine and houses with electricity. When the company made its own electricity, the generators were shut down every week day from noon to 1 P.M. for the purpose of having them checked. So there was no electricity during that period six days of the week. The generators were not oiled on Sundays.

In 1904, the year after the shaft was sunk, Keystone had 127 men working. They worked 181 days and produced 7,587 tons of coal.

The village of Keystone typifies the morale of the new breed of coal mining inhabitants. When the mine closed in 1938 they did not sit back and mope. They took the bull by the horns and did something for the town. The people took over the water supply the coal company had and made improvements that were needed to give them a good supply of water. Several years ago they paid \$13,000 to have their water supply connected with the Herminie Water District. This gives them an emergency supply. This has all been paid for by the hard work of the men and women of the community.



Keystone's second Honor Roll. The first was made of wood. The boy is George Lutsovich jr, the girl Doris Bytheway. Helen Lutsovich's picture.

For a long time the community play ground was down beside the old mine shaft. The mothers were fearful of the site as they thought it was too dangerous for their children. Thru the Community Chest and self raising events, money was raised for playground equipment. Then they decided something better. Something the adults could use. The 77 families organized the Keystone Recreation Committee. They received permission of the township supervisors to erect



a ball field and playground on the site of the old school and slate dump. The school had burnt down in 1936. After spending about \$3000 they have leveled-off the dump and constructed a modern ball field and parking lot. Tennis and basket ball courts will be part of the set-up. They knew what they wanted and went out and worked to get the money to do it. The men and women have worked very hard with self raising money events to pay for this.



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-LOWBER-





From the Atlas of 1876. House was located on the hill above Lowber.





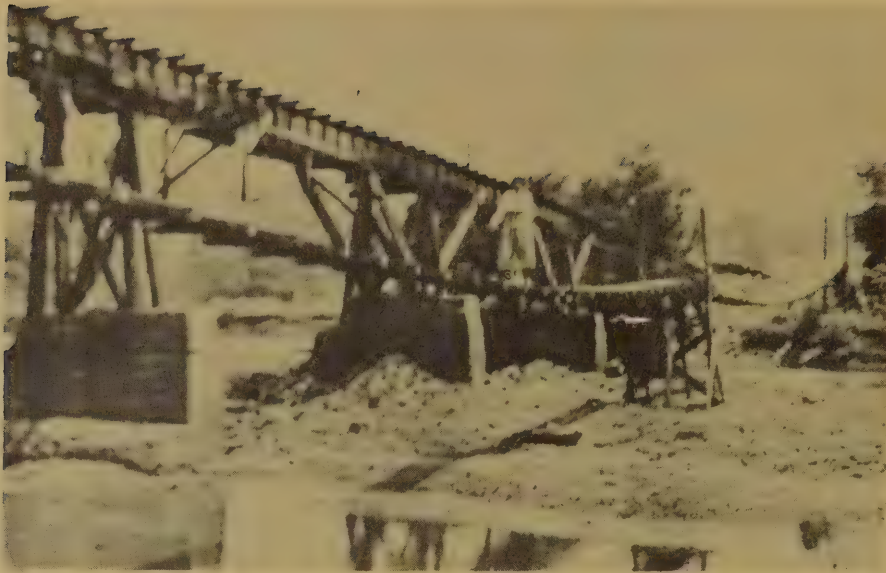
Marchand Mine at Lowber. John Brundage's picture

Simon Gratz, from whom Gratztown was named, owned the land that the Blackburns bought around 1811. Blackburns owned the farm until Jas N. White bought it in the 1930's.

Captain Anthony Blackburn was born in Sewickley Township October 14, 1780. He lived to be 86 years old. The town of Lowber was once called Blackburn. The name was changed to Lowber in 1910. The Pennsylvania Railroad had purchased the Youghiogheny Railroad from the Penn Gas Coal Company around the turn of the century. PRR had a station named Blackburn in the vicinity of Trafford, in Westmoreland County. There was too much confusion, especially in the 1910 strike, between the two Blackburns so the name was changed and the name Lowber was chosen because it was the name of one of the Westmoreland Coal Company's directors: John Welsh Lowber. (Westmoreland Coal and Penn Gas Coal were owned by the same people except for one stockholder who owned Penn Gas stock. He refused to sell his stock. A few years ago, from his estate, his sister gave Perryopolis one million dollars.)

The Penn Gas Coal Company was organized in 1859. It opened mine No. 3 at Blackburn in 1902. In 1904 the mine had one hundred coke ovens and produced 3,396 tons of coke that year. The Westmoreland Coal Company was incorporated in 1854. Westmoreland Coal Company absorbed Penn Gas Coal Company in 1918. The mine was closed July 8, 1930. The slope which was used to get the coal out of the mine was 200 feet long.

The mine at Lowber was called Marchand Mine. This was the name of the railroad stop on the Youghiogheny Railroad and Marchand was the name of the vicinity named after the Marchand family that lived on the hill. When the railroad was operated by Penn Gas Coal, the engines would push the empty coal cars to the tunnel at Chambers Station and let them drift down all the way to the Lowber mine with only a brakeman on the cars.



Trestle from Lowber to Gums Shoe mine. The woman on the swinging bridge is Lorraine Marsh (Brundage). 1917 John Brundage's picture

One of the best keep secrets in the coal industry was the opening of the Lowber Gas Coal Company mine, called Gum Shoe, in 1916. It was located across the creek from Lowber. Someone had their eye on this piece of coal land for a long time. One day the parlor car on the Pennsylvania Railroad stopped at the crossing. The men got out and looked around for a while. Next morning the track foreman for the railroad put a frog in the main line and a siding for the Lowber Gas Coal Company was laid up at the rear of Della Betta's. Then the town learnt about the new coal mine. A tipple was constructed near where Ben Byzon now lives. The coal was brought across the creek on the trestle, across the public road to the tipple to be loaded in railroad cars. Arthur R. Aultman was the foreman for this mine for most of the time it was in operation.

People walked from Lowber over the swinging bridge that spanned the creek. In the 1922 strike the company built striker shanties on their side and imported negroes as strike breakers. The strikers would leave every Saturday for Pittsburgh and return Sunday night. They walked up to Lowber from Gratztown and no one bothered them. The creek once got so high it flooded out the mine. The mine was drained by the Pittsburgh Coal Company thru its slope mine near West Newton.

The strike breakers imported by the Penn Gas Coal Company in the 1910 strike were white people. Those evicted by the company lived in tents which were pitched in front of Joe Prinsi's store. It was a tent city.

There was at least one person killed in the 1922 strike when a gun battle took place between the coal and iron police and a white man. The police had previously taken the man's gun. Then when it was given back to him, he started shooting when he was outside the building. He was shot by the police.



In the early 1880's Frank Farmer had a store in the building at the rear of Red Scarpari's garage. Sometimes it was referred to as the "Company Store" because the miners dealt there. Later a Mr. Holmes operated the store. Mr. Holmes had the idea of buying green bananas and ripening them himself. He had built two caves in which he was going to ripen the bananas. The idea did not work. Now the caves are used as a basement for a house. The Lowber Gas Coal tracks to the tippie were laid over top these caves when the mine was operating.



-Post Office-

Another early store keeper was Joe Prinsi. He had his store more up in "the blocks." It was in front of this store that the strikers lived in tents in the 1910 strike. He started in business in 1906 and continued until 1936 when he moved to Darragh, Pennsylvania.

Dunbar's was another early store. In the late teen's Della Betta's took it over and Mrs. Margaret Della Betta continues to operate it.

In 1905 the J Greer Stores opened a store in Lowber and called it The Speer store after the manager "Bucky" Speer. Mr. Speer had no financial interest in the store. Later Mr. Speer quit the store and entered in the garage business. Red Scarpari is now in the old Speer garage building.

Lowber has had several negro families live there. The last family was the Walter family which moved to Gratztown. Westmoreland Coal Company never brought negroes in as strike breakers.

The 1876 Atlas shows dwelling in the Lowber vicinity but no name is attached to the dwellings.

There was an old Indian fort on the hills above Lowber near the Cool Springs. Dr. John Milligan, who passed away a few years ago at the age of 101, often talked about the fort as he had heard his father talk about it.

Inhabitants of the area have collected a number of Indian relics from this area. (See the History of Lowber M E Church)



School House No. 1

School House No.1 was located where the road going from Gratztown, passes Cool Springs, and meets legislative route 64226 above Lowber. It was on the old Marchand farm. Mrs. John VanKirk now lives in the house. It was a one room school built in 1861. The school was also called Point Pleasant School.

Altho the town was the only one in the township located away from the mines, the company had street lights on its property when the public streets did not. When the company had the town there was no supply of water for the houses. The town was supplied from drilled wells. Then Jas N. White acquired Cool Springs thru the Blackburn purchase the town proceeded in 1941 to lay pipes and have "city" water. Later wells were drilled to supplement the supply. Now they have their own water system and fire protection thru fire plugs and a fine fire company. At first there was a flat monthly rate of \$1.65 per month. When meters were installed, the rates are such that no charge is made for fire protection from the property owners. They now charge \$2.00 a month for the first 3000 gallons and 80¢ a thousand gallons thereafter.

The electricity used by Lowber and the mine was generated at the Adams Mine at Hahntown and transmitted to Lowber via Rillton.





Honor

Roll



Present

School



Old

School

-LOWBER METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH-



The "mother" church of the Lowber M.E. Church was a stone church built in 1833 near McGrew's on the Scott Haven road. According to Mrs. Alta McGrew the first meeting house was the "Old Stone House". "This building stood on the hill, one mile north of Blackburn (Lowber) on the farm of A.B. McGrew. It was built in 1833 and used for both school and church purposes until 1861. It was abandoned for school purposes but the church remained there until 1879 or 1880."

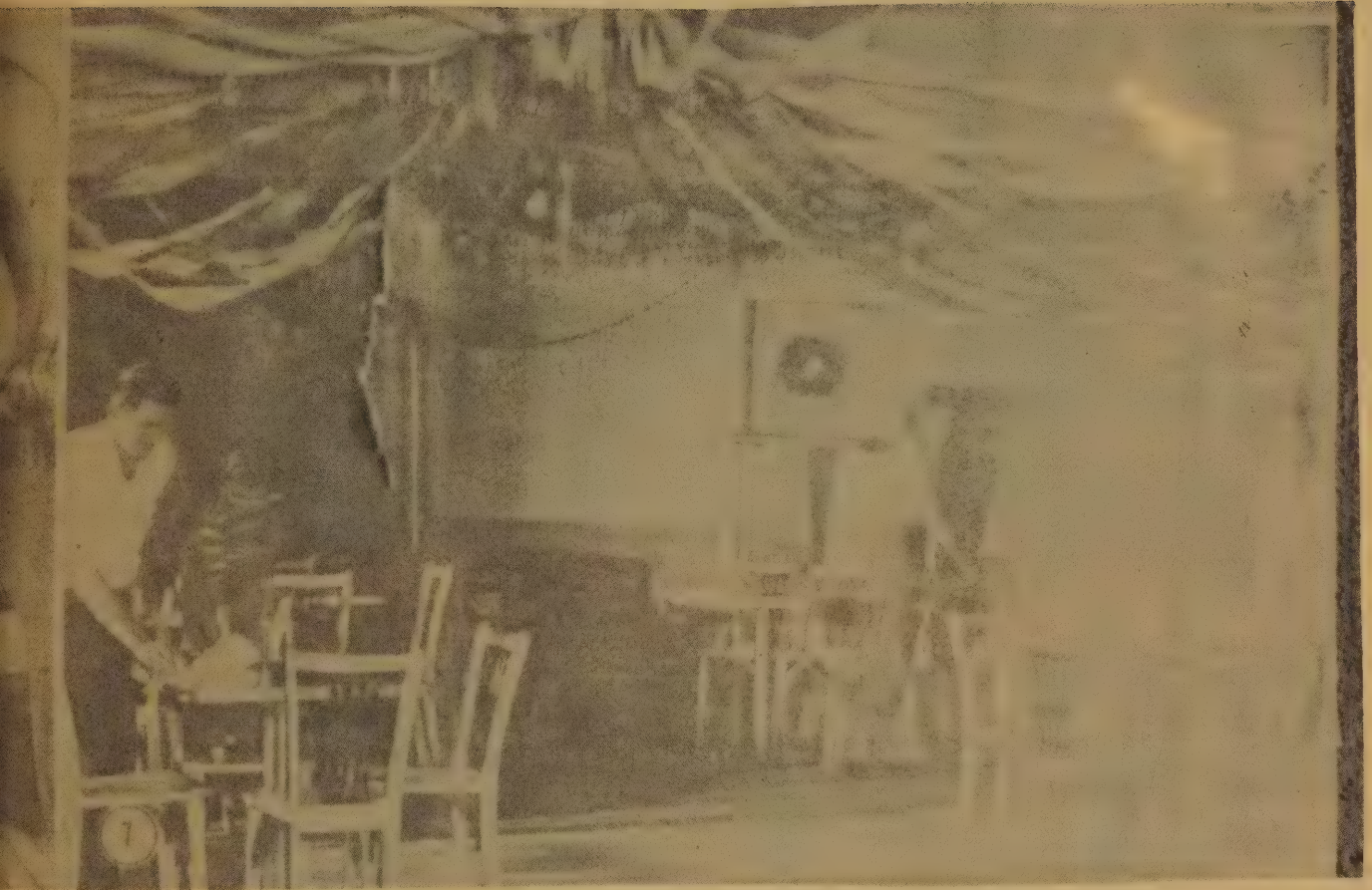
In 1882 the name was changed from "The Old Stone House School Church" to the Blackburn Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1880 the "Old Stone House" had become so dilapidated by age and use it was necessary to erect a new building. The new house of worship was erected on the land of W. Page Blackburn heirs, high up on the right bank of the Big Sewickley Creek. There were two lots given for the sum of \$3.00. The building was dedicated Feb. 13, 1881. The meetings were held in the "Oil House" of the Penn Gas Coal Company while the church was being erected. About 1895 the vestibule was added to the church.

The parsonage was built and on September 15, 1903 it was first used. It was sold in 1940. In 1910 the name was changed from Blackburn to Lowber M.E. Church because there was another town and church of the same name, but larger in Pennsylvania.

"When the church was dedicated Feb. 13, 1881 Rev. Blackburn said in part: "We used to look across the landscape and see the resemblance of a fort thought to have been used (against) the Indians. We have built this Church and I hope it will be used against the enemy of souls." So wrote Mrs Alta McGrew on Mar. 16, 1947. Rev. Blackburn no doubt had reference to the Chapam's fort which is mentioned in a Deed Book in Westmoreland County Courthouse. The deed conveyed: "A certain improvement made on a certain tract of land situate about four miles above the mouth of Sewickley Creek about two miles above the fort, called Chapam's fort, on the south side of the creek at a limestone spring."



-LOWBER VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY-



The "Swing Shanty" in 1950. Thomas Gaidosh and two daughters  
(Edward Steadman's picture from Daily News)

The Lowber Volunteer Fire Company was originated in 1941. In 1943 it received its charter. Thru the earnest and sincere efforts of many of the town's citizenry and guidance from other volunteer fire companies, the Lowber Volunteer Fire Company became a reality.

At first the meetings of the fire company were held in the old School house. It afforded the best available quarters. Later an old building, which became known as the "Swing Shanty" became the headquarters. Here, during the war, dances and parties were held providing one of the few spots in the area where there was some entertainment in those dark days of the war. It was here too, where going away parties for all Lowber servicemen were held to help make their departure more pleasant. All this was done by the fire company.

The first fire fighting equipment consisted of an old squad truck purchased from the Herminie Fire Department thru a financial loan from Leonard Lusvardi. To add to this, an old army surplus trailer pump was purchased so that fires could be fought more adequately.

After several years of hard work came the year 1949 and the purchase of a very modern fire truck, custom built and more than sufficient for the job to be done. In this same year a large tract of land was bought and a hose house built. The building was built entirely by the men of the town. In the same year an ambulance was purchased and the Ladies Auxiliary was formed.

In the years that were to follow the Ladies Auxiliary played a very important role in the progress and achievements of the fire company. They did this by earning and providing funds to help finance the truck purchase and many other projects.

The dreams of the town people were not satisfied as it was always felt that new headquarters were necessary. In 1956 a building committee was appointed and paper work started on this dream. The actual ground breaking took place in 1958. This building was also built entirely by the firemen.

On sunday, May 17, 1959, there was a grand opening and dedication of the Lower Volunteer Firemen's Club.



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#### - M A R S H I L L -

The map of 1867 shows the Mars Hill community and it is served by the Fulton post office. The map shows the cemetery, school, Dr. Mellinger's house, and a church. Also the toll house and dwellings. This community is now located along the Irwin-Herminie Road, one half mile north of Herminie.

The log house near Boerio's greenhouse which was once owned by Dr. Mellinger is thought to be over 175 years old by calculating things told by Dr. Mellinger's grandchildren.





Old Dr. Mellinger's house

It seems, according to Mrs. E.N. Gongaware, that John Ogg lived in a log house at the rear of the house Wm Marsh now lives in. John Ogg was an influential member in the Mars Hill Baptist Church which was located on the hill above the Irwin-Herminie Road where John Arch now lives; between the school and the cemetery. Mr. Ogg moved to the vicinity of the Quaker Settlement. A new Mars Hill Baptist Church was erected in 1840. The old Mars Hill building was sold to a group of United Brethren who had been using the building. Among the trustees of the United Brethren was J C Fox, father of Mrs. Gongaware. When the United Brethren used this church the men sat on one side of the pew and the women on the other, with a divider between them. There was a "Amen" corner on each side of the pulpit where the older people generally sat.

Squire Fletcher Hodgden came to the vicinity in 1838 from Ohio. He was located near where Paul Labuda lives. He owned 1/3 interest in the company that laid out Fairmount, near Irwin, and moved there in the 80's. He was a dealer in cattle and horses while he lived in the township.

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#### -THE MARS HILL BAPTIST CHURCH-

The Mars Hill Baptist Church, located on Legislative Route 64191 about two miles west of Rillton, near the Quaker Church, was built in 1840. Its parsonage was located at Rillton; first across the street from Trozzo's store and then later near the school house. See Rillton for the parsonage swap.



The Mars Hill Baptist Church. Mrs Frank McClain's picture

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# -M I L L G R O V E-

The history of MILLGROVE is really the history of the Markle family. Millgrove rose and fell with the activities of the Markles.

Gaspard Markle erected a grist mill in 1772 on the Sewickley Creek which goes thru their property. Some of the firstflour made west of the Allegheny Mountains was made here. It was sent as far as New Orleans on flat boats. It took six weeks to go to the Gulf. (See Milligans)

General Joseph Markle was a son of Gaspard Markle. In 1811 he and Simon Drum erected the first paper mill. It was a frame structure and was located on the Big Sewickley Creek about one half mile below the Markle mansion. This would be in the vicinity of what is now Hutchinson. This paper mill was the third such mill west of the Allegheny mountains. General Joseph Markle was once a pack rider between here and the east.

The road (Route 71) east of Markle's toward Greensburg, where Rt 71 now crosses the Pennsylvania Railroad, was called the "narrows". When you left the bridge that crosses the creek and went towards Greensburg, the old road made a right turn above where the barn now stands, and then a left turn, sort of a part loop affair. It crossed a narrow strip of land where the railroad bridge now stands. This narrow strip of land, with the Sewickley Creek on one side and the Markle farm on the other, served as a natural road before the coming of the railroad. This narrow strip of land was cut thru to lay the railroad. But when the paper mill was down near the mansion, a tunnel was put this narrow strip of land and water from the dam on the Big Sewickley flowed thru this tunnel, down thru mill races (one is still visible) to operate the mill which was then located on the creek after it made a bend. The barn is now built over part of this race or canal. Thus the dam and tunnel were on one end of the "horseshoe" and the mill on the other.



History records that while General Markle was fighting the Indians and British in the War of 1812, the dam at the narrows was swept away because of a flood. Mrs. Markle had a new dam built and continued to make paper while the General was at war. Their paper making dealings with a single establishment in Pittsburgh was over \$100,000. They supplied most of Western Pennsylvania and a large part of Ohio and Kentucky.

The first paper mill was torn down in 1826. In 1827 a steam paper mill was built of stone and wood. It was over 100 feet long. In 1828 General Markle turned the business over to his sons, S.B. Markle and Cyrus P. Markle. In 1870 S.B. Markle became associated with his father under the name of C.P. Markle and son, which he still continued after his father's death. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1888. He then erected another on the same foundation which was also destroyed by fire on January 2, 1891.

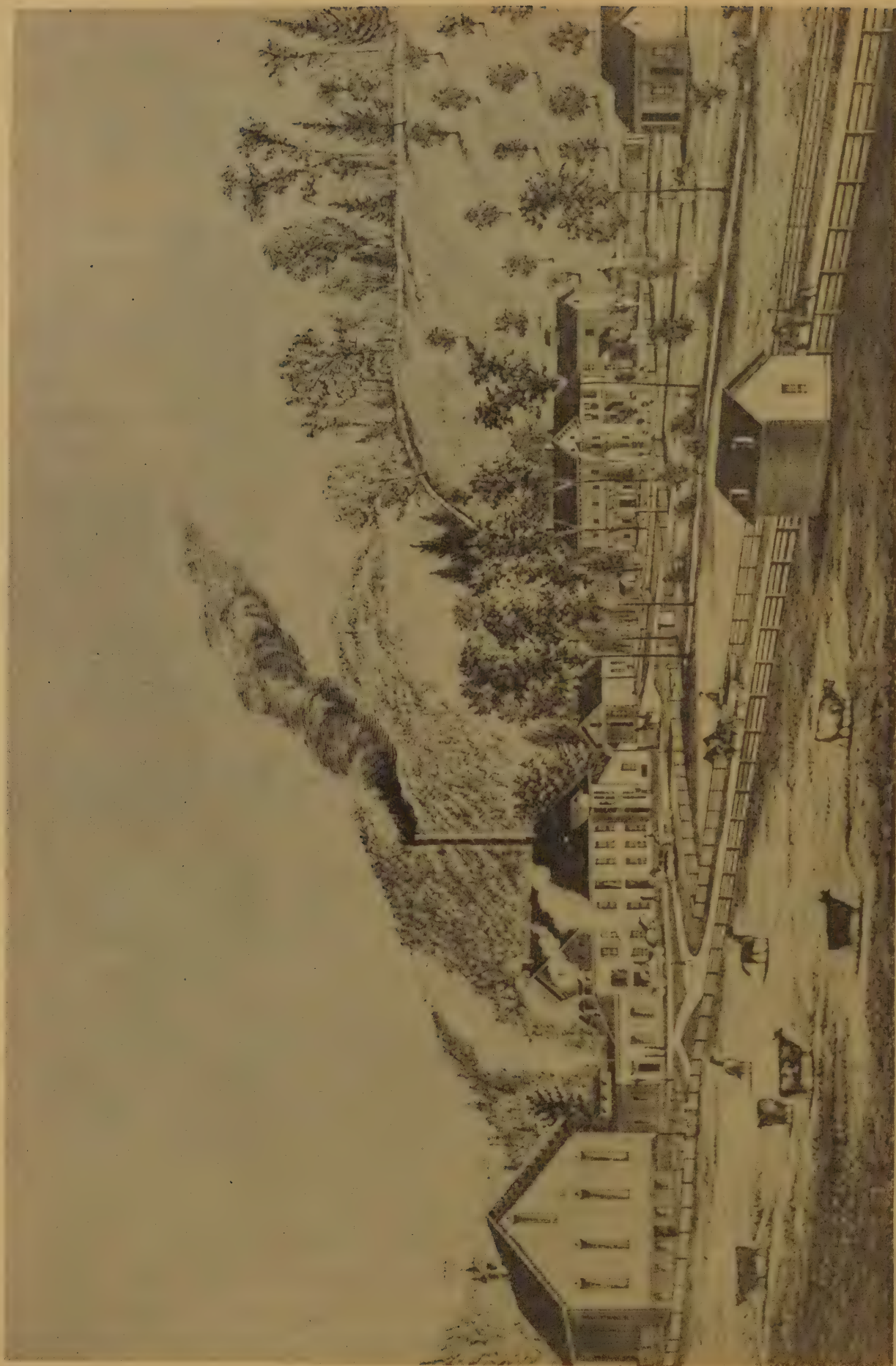
The coming of the coal mines contaminated the creek water with sulphur. So it was impossible to continue making paper.

The Markle property at Millgrove once had 18 buildings. Mr. Markle had a building erected across the road which served as a school and church for his employees. He paid the teacher and the preacher. Some of the buildings were destroyed by the fire of 1891. Some were torn down to make a barn which burnt in 1923. The building once used as a school and church was used to store hay. It burnt a few years before the barn. Today the only old thing is the mansion which was built in 1806 and full with things of old which would be at home in any museum. They are priceless, particularly the one picture painted over 100 years ago showing Henry Clay addressing the United States Senate.

Shepard S. Markle Jr. introduced into Sewickley Township the first registered Jersey cattle ever brought into Westmoreland County. John Frazier Hamilton had a carriage factory which employed 5 or 6 helpers. It operated from 1880 until 1888 when it moved to West Newton.

Another old name in the region is Milligan. John C. Milligan was born June 12, 1791. He was a farmer and a cabinet maker. He manufactured coffins and supplied all those used in the township. He died in 1886. He was the grandfather of Dr. John Milligan who died in 1952 at the age of 101 years.

The land for the Millgrove school was sold by Gasper Markle to the school district in 1837 for \$20.00. The deed recites the fact that this land was granted to the Markles in 1799 by the Penns. Possibly one of the parts the Penns reserved for themselves according to their custom. After this first little red school house was no longer used for school purposes, a Mr. Markle made chairs and furniture there. It was located at the rear of the Grange building, down in the hollow more. Some of these kitchen chairs are in use today; over a 100 years old.



MILLGROVE. Residence and paper mill of Gen. C.P. Markle. Mill burnt in 1888.  
Joe and Grace Markle's picture



-R I L L T O N-



Herman Brown's picture

The name RILLTON came from the name of Charles Gaut's wife. Gaut was married in August 1884. He was the owner of a large farm in the vicinity and his wife's name was Rilla Gaut.

Mrs Mamie Weddell Ludwick, who was a school teacher and worked at the Fair Grounds in the summer, tells of the many times she walked with her mother from their farm in Rillton to get mail at the Fulton post office, which was near what is now Herminie, in the Adolph Sereno property where Ben Dogulas lives. Prior to being the Fulton Post Office, this house was a stopping off place for travelers on the Mt Pleasant Pittsburgh Turnpike. This Fulton post office is shown on the map of 1867 as the post office for the Mars Hill community. It was in the early 1880's that she came here for mail. The post office was then moved to her uncle George Weddell's farm in Rillton. He was postmaster for three years.

After a while it was moved to a store and house which stood where Rillton's Honor Roll now is located. Wm Critchfield was postmaster here in 1892. The building was jacked-up and moved up the hill. This old store is now part of the Frank Cheselski store. The post office was once called McGrew because of the railroad stop being called that.

In 1888 the name was changed to Rillton. But the railroad stop continued to be called McGrew until the passenger trains stopped running in 1918.

The Charles E. Parr store was built in 1905 by the J Greer Company. It was called the Parr store because Mr. Parr owned 1/3 interest in the Greer Co. Mr. Parr and Mr. Charles True, both of Cowansburg, are the only two Spanish American War Vets now living in the township; and neither went to war from the township. In 1909 the post office was moved to a small building at the side of the Parr Store. Later it was moved into the store where it is now located. In August 1937 the store and post office were robbed of \$190.00

At the present time the office serves about 215 families which is about 1000 patrons.



Charles E. Parr's picture.

In the early 1890's Trozzo's had a store in Robbins Station. They canvassed on foot all the places from Robbins Station to Sutersville. When they got to Sutersville they took the train home to Robbins. The food stuff was delivered later by horse and wagon. In 1905 they came to Rillton. Later they purchased the Herminie Feed and Supply Company from Andrews. They are still doing business in these two locations. Thus making them the oldest establishment doing business in the township.





Until the Rillton School was built, the vicinity went to school at Mars Hill on the Irwin-Herminie Road. One of the girls who rode from Rillton on a bike is still hale and hardy. The riding of the bike to school must have been good for her health.



In the 1890's John Highberger had a red carpenter shop at the rear of where the post office now is located. He made windows, frames, and did general carpenter repairs to buildings.

The Westmoreland Coal Company opened a mine at Rillton on December 17, 1904. It was called the Criterion Mine. The word Criterion was chosen because the company used samples of this coal to give to prospective customers to judge the quality of Westmoreland's Coal. In August 1930 the name was changed to the Riley mine after a director of the Westmoreland Coal Company. The mine was closed June 30, 1938. The mine shaft was 320 feet deep. It produced 12,176,670 tons of coal during its time.

Like other mining towns, Rillton had to depend on drilled wells and cisterns to catch rain water for their water supply. The coal company had a dam in the vicinity of Indian Lake ( now used for fishing). Much money was spent by the people digging cisterns, lining them with brick, making a filter across the middle with brick and filling this middle partition with charcoal and sand so as to filter the water from one side of the cistern to the other. There being no inside bathrooms and few electric washers, the demand for water was low. In 1946 the town, with the permission of the township supervisors, contracted with the North Huntingdon Water Authority to supply them with water. Lines were laid from Chambers Station. Later this authority was taken over by the Westmoreland County Municipal Authority.

The electricity for the mine and blocks was made at the Adams Mine, Hahntown, and transmitted to Rillton, and then on to Lowber.

*The S. Obermayer Com-  
pany's Plant, at Rillton,  
Westmoreland Co., Pa.,  
manufacturers of Foundry  
Facing.*



Besides the Louis A. Riley mine, another large industry in Rillton was the "Facing Mill." Clarence Schlabach, who started here in 1922 and is at present superintendent of the Elizabeth works, says it was built in 1904 by the S.B. Obermayer Company. It employed 20 people. The name was changed to the Penn Rillton Company when it was merged with the Penn Facing Mills of Irwin. In 1928 the plant was dismantled. It is one of the largest manufacturers of foundry facings in the United States. The ground coal was used to make gray iron castings in foundries. The facing mill at Rillton and then at Irwin used Westmoreland Coal in its operation as long as the coal company was in existence, about 54 years. The facing mill sponsored baseball teams after World War I. It had a good team as did the coal company, altho the coal company sponsored teams for a much longer time.

Some people would have you believe that booze and religion do not mix. Well, they mixed in Rillton. There was a building across from Trozzo's store that was a parsonage for the Mars Hill Baptist Church. Certain people in Rillton wanted a hotel license. The coal company made a deal. It built a parsonage and a small chapel on the road past the school and traded these two for the parsonage. The parsonage building across from Trozzo's became a hotel. McDonalds operated it. This building, if it had not burned down and could talk, could tell about the person who was engaged to be married; met another person at this building, got married to this person; and they have been happily married for more than 50 years.



For years sunday school classes were held in this chapel. Now the chapel and the parsonage are dwelling houses. After the McDonald hotel was licensed Bruno's received a hotel license. So here was an instance where religion and booze mixed.



Bruno's bar before prohibition. John J Bruno's picture.

Today Rillton is in a better shape and has more civic pride than it ever had as can be shown by its "Man of the Year Award" to the outstanding citizen of the community.

Rillton is one of the four communities in the township that have a fire company. They have a modern building and the latest fire fighting equipment.





Honor

Roll



Fire House



1910 police.  
L to R: J Leasure  
Albert Davis  
James Pearce  
Chas Avis  
Frank P McClain.

Mrs McClain's  
picture



On the outskirts of Rillton at the Howell farm is a marker where General Braddock made his 18th stop of his march, and the only one in this township. It was erected on November 23, 1932 from pennies contributed by the township school children. This is called the Monocatootha or Monacutucca Camp. Monocatootha's son was accidentally shot by one of Braddock's men. General Braddock had the son buried with military honors and thus pacified the Indians. He camped here on July 6, 1755. Marker picture appears elsewhere.

At the other end of Rillton, on Legislative Route 64191, is a log house built by Simon McGrew about 1755. It is still used as a dwelling. Tradition has it that Braddock stayed here when his men camped at Howell's.

In 1778 William McGrew was granted an order of court by Judge Crawford of Hannastown to cut, clear and bridge a road, thirty feet wide, from Greensburg to a white oak on Simon McGrew's plantation. In 1783 he was given a court order to cut a road from this same white oak tree on his father's place to Davis's Ferry (now Buena Vista) on the Youghiogheny River. (Buena Vista was on the Sewickley side of the river.) McGrews were Quakers. You can still see among the timbers of the log house, holes which were made for rifles to be fired from. The holes are now plastered shut. In 1802 James A. McGrew erected a substantial brickhouse which is still standing and being used as a dwelling. It is standing on the road going to Mars Hill church where the first road to the right leaves the Legislative Rt 64191. So you see Rillton has had its share of lore in the early days of history.

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Irwin Herminie Traction Company's summer car. 1915  
(Tony Montecupo's picture)

-S C O T T   H A V E N -



Peter  
Lovell's  
picture

SCOTT HAVEN was once known as Moore's Station. Moore's had a distillery here. They also had coal mines in the vicinity. This was around 1869. The map in the Atlas of 1876, which is in the Law Library in the Court House, shows Moore's Station. The name was changed when W.L. Scott Coal Company had Scott's Mine No. 1 here. Later the Pittsburgh Coal Company bought the mine and called it Ocean No.1 .

The census of 1890 showed that 525 people lived in Scott Haven. Looking at the place today, this is hard to conceive when there is only about 125 people living there. Up to 1922 there were no negroes living in Scott Haven. Today there is only about 20 white people living in the patch.

When Pittsburgh Coal Company took over the mines along the river in 1898 they converted the distillery into a supply and repair shop for their machinery. This was the main shop for the Pittsburgh Coal Company. They also made all the electricity that their mines along the river used. All the repairs to mining machinery and motors were made here. About 1926 they moved all these operations to Library, Penna. With the operations went the skilled labor and the downfall of the town. Jas N. White, later cashier of the First National Bank of Herminie, worked here in the office in 1912.

There was a cable car ferry (bucket) which went across the river to Industry. Men working at Scott Haven and who lived in Allegheny County used this bucket to travel to and from work. People who lived in Allegheny County and wanted to shop in the Federal Supply Store in Scott Haven received free transportation provided by the store.

There was also a large river ferry that followed a steel cable across the river. The ferry had a rudder to help overcome the river current. It held two autos and men used to cross with their autos rather than take the long muddy road to Sutersville and then cross the bridge. This was in operation until the early 1930's.





John Brundage's picture.

Scott Haven was a very beautiful town. Each year the Pittsburgh Coal Company held contests among the mining communities as to the best kept lawns and gardens. The last year this was done was 1939.



Scott Haven Civic Club 1939. Mel Hampton's picture. L to R: Mel Hampton, Theresa Grace, Dela Stevenson, Augusta Coffield, Mae Smith, Ethel Hunter.

When the coal company was here, they had large tanks on the hill above the town to supply water at different outlets and to some houses. When this system became dilapidated, the town people got Lloyd Marks to come in and drill wells. He now supplies the drinking water for the town.

Below Scott Haven, toward Shaner, was the Dilworth Mine. The miners called it the "Coffee Pit" because Dilworth was the name of a popular brand of coffee at that time. The opening for this mine was between Scott Haven and Buena Vista.

The post office at Scott Haven is still in business, altho some of the town people get their mail thru RD 1, Irwin, Pa. When the company store (Federal Supply Company) was in existence, the office was there. Now it goes to the house who ever happens to be postmaster.

Altho Scott Haven once had a distillery, it has never had a legitimate hotel. A hotel was built up the hollow from Scott Haven but no one was ever successful in getting a license to operate it. Later it became dwellings.

This is one of the very bad depressed areas. Work for these people just don't exist. Most of the town is getting one form of welfare or another. It would safe to say that not 10% of the people are employed.



Irene Wood's picture.







Hilma Leasure's picture

Across the tracks where the road crosses the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Shaner was a log house. The Shaner family lived there before the coming of the Pittsburg-Connellsville Railroad. From this family's name came the name of the village. Altho the village was called Shaner or Shaner Station, the post office was first called Youghiogheny and finally Yohoghany. The post office was closed in 1934 and the vicinity is now served by rural free delivery from the Irwin office. Once rural free delivery (RFD) was out of Yohoghany post office.

The Youghiogheny Coal Hollow Coal Co. (YCHC Co.) had many coal banks (mines) along the Shaner valley. Thomas Moore, the distiller, once had mines in the Shaner vicinity. Once there was feverish activities here due to the coal boom. The map of 1867 shows this to appear to be the largest community in the township. The Central Yough Coal Co. had a mine here and it was owned and operated by Walter Calvery. In the 1890's there were about 36 homes in Shaner; today it does not have half that many. It is one of the towns along the Youghiogheny that became a "ghost town" with the fall of the coal mining industry. It was the prosperity of towns like this that caused the building of locks on the river between West Newton and McKeesport. Now the locks are gone. All that can be seen at low water is there former location.





N.B. Copeland's picture. Stewart's store about 1922. L to R: R E Stewart, Ada Stewart, Pearl Sayles (Copeland), Mrs RE Stewart, and two Stewart boys.

R E Stewart had a store here for many years. When he became tax collector his wife Maude took over the operating of the store and the post office. Mr. Charles Fellabaum, Mrs Stewart's father, was a mine boss and fire boss in the mines in the vicinity for many years. In 1938, at the age of 81 years, he was the subject of an article in the McKeesport Daily News. He told of how they went into the mines at 4:30 A.M. and came out at night. How in the winter they never saw daylight.

Shaner has been plagued with floods. Beside the big one on St Patrick's day in 1936 and the one in 1954, they had one on July 26, 1979 which swept the school house into the river. Then twenty years later, in the summer, another cloudburst came down the valley and took the school away again. This time the remnants of the school were used to build a hotel which was operated by Ralph Braddigan. The flood of 1879 also swept away the school house that was located down the tracks at Buena Vista. In the early 1870's Shaner had two saloons. One was operated by James Skillan and the other by David Keener. Each saloon had its own faction and there was no love between them. Their absence of love caused many hard fought battles between them. With the mines went the saloons.

When William C. Gallagher, the distiller, left Guffey he came to Shaner and had an undertaking establishment until 1884.



N.B. Copeland picture

The name Youghiogeny is about as old as anything in the township. One writer in 1751 spells it Yogh yo gaine, and the diary of one of Braddock's men in 1755 spelt it Yoxhio geni, after a tribe of Indians. Several other spellings appear in the Gratztown account.

The map of 1867 shows the town to have:

1. Many dwellings
2. Ament & Finch had a store and were dealers in Dry Goods, groceries, drugs and medicine.
3. Wilson and Rupert had a dry goods and grocery store.
4. R G Newton had a blacksmith shop.
5. Philip Bolander had a meat market.
6. Mrs. J Rupert had a store and post office.
7. There was a hotel.
8. Also a black smith shop.
9. On the outskirts of shaner Wiley's had a store.

In 1870 Shaner had a population of 300 people. To go to the Court House in Greensburg, the people would take the B & O to Braddock and then get the Pennsylvania Railroad to Greensburg.

In the presidential election of 1912, the interest was so high in the community that the B & O telegrapher at Shaner was paid by some of the citizens to work overtime so as to get the election results.

Down the tracks, towards Sutersville, was the Buena Vista railroad tower. On the hill above the tower was Summer Hill School. A grist mill was located in this vicinity and was operated by water from a creek that no longer exists.

The Consolidated Rubber Corporation built a rubber factory in the outskirts of Shaner, towards Sutersville, in 1919. It made tires, toy balloons, and rubber products. A garbage disposal dump is now located here. Garbage is brought in on the B & O trains and burnt. This land was part of the old Hamilton farm.





Hilma Leasure picture

In the 1890' and later there was a ferry across the river to Stringtown. It was a basket affair that was operated on a cable stretched across the river. You had to pull your self across. The doctor from across the river had to use it to make his calls in the township. The people of Shaner and vicinity went to the Dravo Church which was located across the river from Guffey. They went across in a large flat boat. There was also a large ferry across the river that could hold a team of horses and a wagon. Four men with oars propelled the boat-ferry across the river.

During the turn of the century Dave Pierce had a siding put in at Shaner. Cattle were brought in by the car and unloaded to the farmers which bought them.

One of the first settlers in this region was Alexander McDonald, a relative of Charles E. Tefft's mother. Mr. McDonald owned the farm above Shaner and on into Guffey. Charles E. Tefft, a high school teacher here in the township in 1924, and his sister Harriet were the sixth generation born on this farm. (See Guffey for more about McDonald)

Samuel Gilbert, one of the Quakers, was met one day by Levant Tefft, father of Charles. Mr. Tefft said "Hello, Mr. Gilbert". Mr. Gilbert walked on a few steps, turned, and replied: "Levant, my Christian name is Samuel, and I would thank thee to call me by it."

One of the Italian families in Shaner had trouble with the "Black Hands," just as Guffey was having. This store keeper's wife delivered the "dummy" money, armed with a butcher knife. But no one appeared. They either knew the package was a fake or that police were watching.



Mrs. Raymond Maloney's picture

The McKeesport Daily News on August 28, 1962 ran a page of pictures about Guffey and Shaner. About Shaner it said: "Shaner, another former mining community, has not fully accepted the retirement imposed upon it with the closing of the mines. Although it contains only 15 houses, it boasts an active Woman's Club whose efforts are responsible for the Honor Roll that lists 96 citizens of Guffey and Shaner who served their country during World War I and II and the Korean conflict. The tiny community continues to exist in the backwash of today's age of easy transportation, almost untouched by the progress of recent years."



-W A L T Z     M I L L-

WALTZ MILL is located on the old Mt Pleasant-Pittsburg Turnpike. It was named after the Waltz Family. At one time it was known as Carr's Mill. The map of 1792 shows Carrs and shows the name Stokely is spelt Hokely.

Jacob Waltz moved to Waltz Mill from the Brownsville region. He became engaged in milling, distilling, wool-carding and farming. He was active in the Whiskey Insurrection. He located on a tract of land on the Big Sewickley Creek which he purchased from Susannah Stokely, a daughter of John DeCamp. Susannah's patent for her land is enrolled in the Rolls Office of the State of Pennsylvania.

John DeCamp, father of Mrs. Stokely, was a great lover of horses and had a race track course below the fort on the flat fields. There were three houses around this fort, including a school house. He was the owner of slaves. This fort was two stories high and was located near the site of the present Westinghouse Atomic Plant. The fort is generally referred to as Stokely's fort or block house because the DeCamp girl married Jeremiah Stokely.

Jacob Waltz built the mills known the country wide as Waltz Mills. He also had a saw mill. The grist mill was a four story structure located between where Robert McCune now lives and the Big Sewickley Creek. It was in operation and torn down in 1907 to make way to build the Pennsylvania Railroad from Cowansburg to Greensburg.

When traveling thru Waltz Mill, at first you had to ford the Big Sewickley near where the present bridge is located. The railroad station, later, was to the right of the bridge across from the Highberger house. A wooden bridge was then constructed, but after a while it collapsed with a heavy load being hauled over it. It was replaced by a single wood arch, covered bridge, just like the covered bridge at Bell's Mill today. This bridge was replaced because the wagoners on the turnpike were hampered by its roof due to the angle on which it was built in relation to the road. A single arch steel bridge took its place. The coming of heavy trucks and traction engines for farm machinery made this bridge not useful. In 1925 the present concrete bridge was built.

When Jacob Waltz had the distillery and the turnpike was in operation, he always kept a barrel of whiskey at the bridge so the drivers and wagoners could help themselves. (Whiskey was selling for 50¢ a gallon) Eli Suter, who was born in 1819 and married a Waltz girl, bought the Waltz grist mill and operated it for a while. He later founded Sutersville.

Joseph Highberger married Susan Waltz in 1844 and they became the owner of the old Waltz homestead where Clarence Rhodes now lives. House is to the right of the bridge. The house was probably built around 1820, all things considered. Joseph Highberger was one of the postmasters at Waltz Mill, then some times spelt Walts Mill.

In 1878 George W. Kelly "exchanged one hundred acres of his land (in South Huntingdon Township) for the Walt's Mill property in Sewickley Township consisting of fifteen acres of land, a large four story grist mill, a saw mill, two dwelling houses, a store building and a blacksmith shop. For the past 12 years (1890) he has given his time to the management of his mills, farming, and attending to the store and post office." Before the

coming of the railroad, the mail came from Hunkers by horse back and buggy. There were daily deliveries.



This is Susan Highberger Gordon's picture of the old Highberger house in 1892.

Anyone who had seen Waltz Mill ten years ago and again today would not recognize the place. Instead of being one of the oldest places in the township, it appears to be the newest. Ground was broken on July 8, 1957 for the Westinghouse Electric Corporation Atomic Testing Reactor. It costs 7 million dollars to construct. It was shut down March 25, 1962 because of lack of customers demand for testing of fuel elements and other reactor parts under conditions of nuclear radiation. The plant was valued at 18 million dollars when closed down. It was the world's first industry owned nuclear materials testing reactor. It was designed to test all types of materials to see how they would stand-up under high levels of radiation. It went "critical" in July 1958.

The alternate Route 71 from the Pennsylvania Turnpike at New Stanton toward Washington, Penna. made a great improvement in the town. It has had a rebirth. The people have remodeled their homes until everything looks like new construction.

The first school house in Waltz Mill was built on the same side of the road as the present Westinghouse plant; but opposite where the dirt road goes off toward the Yukon road. When this school became too small and also dilapidated, it was torn down and a new school erected on the hill going from Waltz Mill toward Madison, near the left hand bend of the road.

(Some of this material is from "The History of the Waltz Family")





Waltz School 1892. Susan H Gordon's picture



In 1962 the International Paper Company erected this paper products factory on 20 acres of land. It is now in operation.

William Waltz has an account book of 1853 which belonged to Waltz and Hough and it shows these prices:

Sugar	lb	8¢	Pantz stuff	30¢ yd
Butter	lb	15¢	Muslin	7¢ yd
Coffee	lb	12 1/2¢	Pare calf boots	\$3.50
Tea	lb	\$1.00	Pare hoez	25¢
Salt	bushel	40¢	Small shews	25¢
cheas	lb	10¢	Vest trimmed	86¢

Whiskey	gal.	50¢	Wooden bucket	25¢
Eggs	doz	6 1/4¢	Corn broom	20¢
Candelz	lb	12¢	Coal	bushel 2¢

Plenty of molasses sold at 45¢ a gallon and macrel at 7¢ each

Shoeing mare 25¢

Shoeing horse 32¢



Westinghouse Atomic Testing plant



Christian Union Association





Mrs Wreford Gongaware's picture. 1912 The white building on the left is Omlor's Hotel. The barn and company store are on the right.

WHYEL is a small community lying along the Madison-Yukon road. It was a community built as a coal mining town. It was one of those "boom" towns while the mines were working. It was named after Harry Whyel, owner of the Whyel Coal Company, Unitontown, Pennsylvania.

The Whyel Coal Company opened a mine here about 1908. Houses were built for some of the employees. A "company store" was built and operated under the name of The Sewickley Supply Company. Mrs. Elsie Gongaware was a clerk and cashier here for some years. At the present time the old store room is used as a church by the Whyel Gospel Mission, while the upper floor continues to be used for dwelling. Whyel voting place is in this church.

Nick Omlor built a hotel along this road about 1911 or 1912 but he was never able to get a hotel license. It has been used for people to live in.

About 1916 the Byrne Coal Company opened a mine north of the Whyel mine. Pete Lutz in later years stripped much of the coal off this land. Byrne's bought the coal under the land going towards Madison.

Both the Whyel Coal Company and the Byrne Coal Company operated coke ovens. Whyel opened theirs about 1911 and Byrne shortly after they opened their mine. The ovens were operated until after the end of World War I. They lay useless until 1941 when they were renovated and operated during World War II. Now they are in a very dilapidated condition.



. This is Mrs John O. Miller's picture of Whyel school which was located up on the bank on the left side of the road going to Yukon. 1910

At the present time most of the property owners have renovated their properties and saw that the vicinity did not become a "ghost" town.





## -S C H O O L S-

In the early days of the township there was no school system as we now have. Most of the early schools were built on land donated by farmers who wanted their children to have an education without going too far from home. When the school was not in use any more, the land went back to the farm. The early schools were built of logs. The teacher for each school sometimes had to solicit pupils because he was paid so much per pupil. Some family would provide him board as their assessment toward his wages. Then there was the subscription plan whereby pupils desiring an education went to the teacher's home.

Later groups set up school districts and elected directors. People within the district paid taxes for school purposes. There was no state requirements for teachers; except an examination before a justice of the peace. The length of the term varied from district to district. Generally it was four or five months depending on the length of the winter. There was no compulsory school attendance. One of the tenets of William Penn was that every child should know how to read and write before he was twelve years old. The beginning of our present system was the free school act of 1834. Legislature passed the public school act after Congress in 1834 declared that education was the state's responsibility. In 1836 the legislature gave the commonwealth's support to public schools.

In the old days, and up to 30 years ago in the township, the teachers were the janitors in the small schools and also the fireman. An old school custom in the country schools about 1850 was that the master (teacher) should "treat" the pupils at Christmas. The treat consisted of candy, sugar cake, apples, or nuts, or anything that was convenient. Now the pupils take "apples" to the teacher.

Women were rarely ever employed in the county as teachers prior to 1840. When hard times of 1837 came, the schools began to employ women because their services could be had for half the sum paid men teachers.



Pleasant Ridge School near Anna Mary Pierce  
(Anna Mary Pierce's picture)

Across the township line at Robbins Station was the birth place of Edward E. Robbins. While he was a state senator he introduced the law providing for free text books in public schools.



Millgrove School  
Lela Albright's picture



Pore's School  
Majorie Hughes' picture

The school system of the township was once divided into four districts: Mars Hill, Sulphur Springs, Youghiogheny, and Sewickley Township. Each had its own school board and schools. The length of the term varied from 4 months in Sewickley Township to 8 months in Sulphur Springs. In 1855 there were no female teachers in any of these four districts. The monthly wage was between \$22 a month and \$25 a month. In 1905 the wages varied from \$50 to \$60 for men and \$45 to \$52.50 for women. In 1962 the starting salary for the teachers is \$4100 for nine months.

On July 15, 1911 a meeting of the directors of the four districts was called to consolidate the schools because of an act of legislature. The consolidation of these four districts made Sewickley Township School District a third class district and the school term became 8 months long. The first supervising principal of this new Sewickley Township School District was J C Pierce. He was succeeded in 1917 by G C Gressman. Henry W. Good succeeded Mr. Gressman on January 1, 1947. Sewickley Township school district and Arone Boro School district are now combined into Sewickley Area School District with Mr. Good as Supervising Principal.



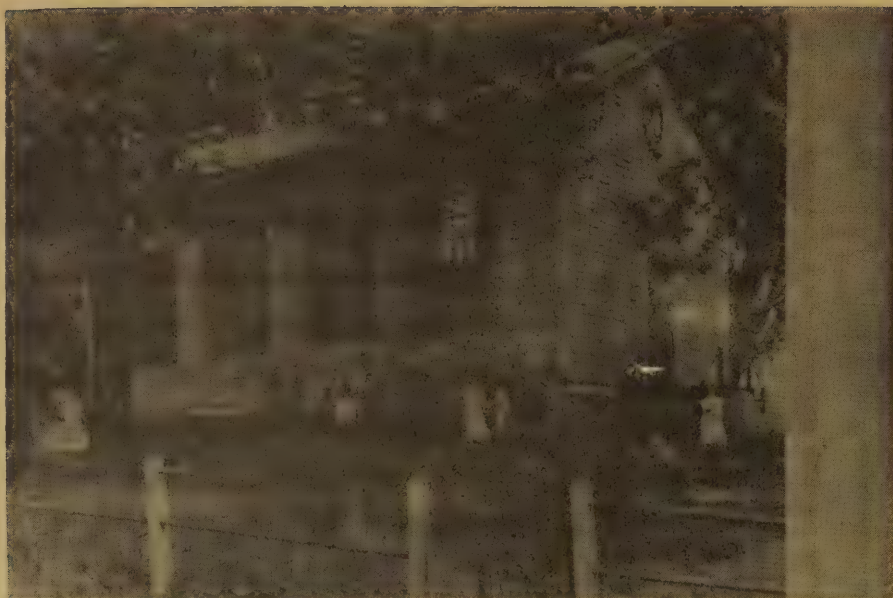


The school at Herminie which burnt in 1917

An attractive feature of the schools of the early days was the "spelling bee". This was held at night and was attended by the older pupils, their parents, and by pupils of both sexes who had recently finished school. One of the things needed for these was proper lighting. There were no lamps in those days, so a number of older pupils were designated to bring candles. This old fashioned spelling bee produced good spellers, perhaps better than we now have. One Pittsburgh radio station is trying to revive the idea by having spelling bees on the air where school children from Allegheny County compete with each other.



Frank Maza's picture of the second Sulphur Springs school. First was built in 1837.



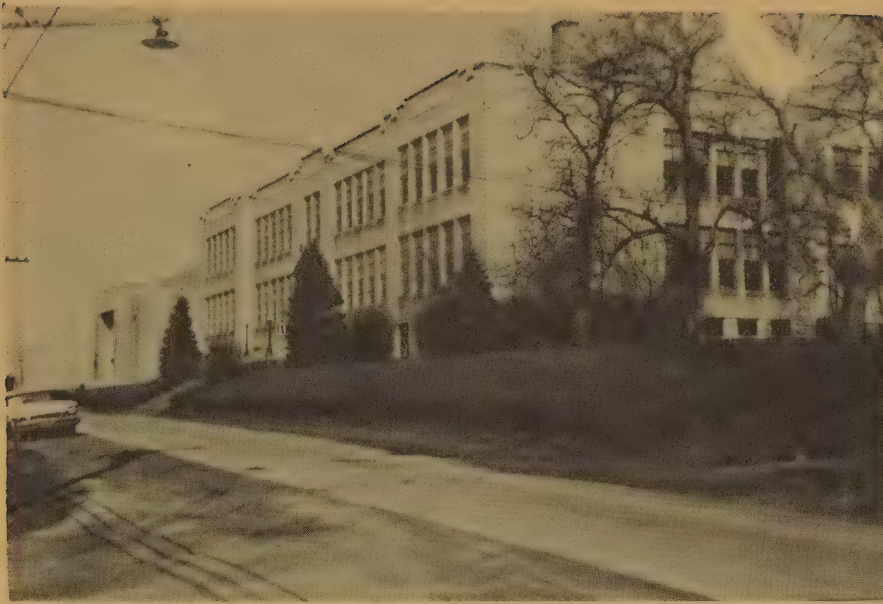
Mrs. Frank Elliot's picture of Mars Hill School 1905. Mildred Sittman (Vanatt) is the teacher.

Before the public school in Herminie was built in 1894, there being no school in Rillton, the children of these two vicinities along with those from the Keystone region, went to Mars Hill which was located where John Arch now lives. The ground for this school was bought in June 1837 and Miss Margaret Howell has the original deed. In 1837 the land where the Millgrove school was built was bought from Gaspar Markle. Each of these lands costs \$20. Another early school started in 1837 was the Sulphur Springs school.



Edna Highberger's picture of Benford, built 1861. First school was wood.





Junior-Senior High School

Another feature of the early schools was the closing exhibition. This came at the end of the school term. It was something like a private theatrical, with pupils as performers. The entertainment consisted of recitations, essays, dialogues, music, and sometimes a debate between the older pupils of the school. When the Sewickley Township High was established in 1920 this kind of an affair was staged monthly between the Oracles and the Addisonians, two groups into which the student body was divided.

When the passenger trains into Herminie stopped running in 1928, the school had to buy buses to haul the students previously transported by the train as no successful bidder to do the job could be found.

On October 23, 1931 Sewickley Township had 11 schools in use and six were closed. There were 1913 pupils in grade school and 335 in high school. 42 elementary and 11 high school teachers were employed. The eighth grade had 169 pupils and the senior class had 50 pupils. The costs for tuition was \$3.87 for grade school and \$9.63 per month for high school pupils. 375 pupils were being transported to and from school each day. There was one vacant room at Cameron (Hutchinson) and one at Herminie school.

On April 6, 1962 there were 791 elementary school pupils and 727 in the junior-senior high school. 297 of the township pupils were going to parochial schools. 9 buses were used to transport the township pupils. 1180 pupils per day were transported to and from school (Sewickley Township pupils only). The township required the services of 64 teachers.

So from 25 rooms in 1905 we are down to 5 school buildings in 1962: Junior-senior high school and elementary school in Herminie; Rillton school; Lowber School; and Cameron. In 1905 there were 27 teachers with 1058 pupils. In 1931 with 53 teachers there were 2248 pupils. Today we have 64 teachers and 1518 pupils. The school population was high in 1931 because until the stock market crash in 1929 which started the depression, we were riding high and there were big families. Then the depression came and down went the size of the families.



Elementary School at Herminie

Some of the single people hastened to get married in the depression so as to get work on the W P A (Works Progress Administration) at \$52.80 per month. Single men could not get on W P A. Then the World War II came and men of marriagable age were few and far between. Now after World War II the G I's returned, married, got decent jobs with schooling provided by the government. The school population is again on the way up. New schools are contemplated because of the increase in marriages and size of families. The building of the St Edward Parochial School in 1957 has eased the load somewhat. Some of the catholic pupils now go and more will be going to the new Catholic High School in Greensburg, Pa.

In the early days pupils along the B & O went to McKeesport High School (altho a brother and sister from Shaner walked to Norwin); those along the Youghiogheny Railroad wen to Irwin(Norwin); those from the places served by the Penna Railroad went to Greensburg High School. With the coming of the street car in 1909, it took the pupils to Norwin.

The first freshman class of Sewickley Township High School was in 1920. The first senior class to graduate was in 1923 and consisted of five members. The members had gone elsewhere in their freshman year. In 1923 the high school had 6 teachers which gave instruction to 93 pupils. An academic and commercial course were offered. The school progressed from an eight year elementary and four year high school to a six year elementary and six year junior-senior high school in 1946.

From the early twenties to the early thirties the pupils and adults of the township improved their minds by attending Lyceum concerts which featured the best of artists. These concerts were well attended by pupils and adults.

In 1933 the school paper " REFLECTOR " was established. It was published monthly. This paper was instrumental in starting the May Queen festivities.

In 1926 the high school started to teach agriculture. In 1927 the Agriculture Class brought home from Sate competition at State College four 2nd place ribbons.



In the early days before the completion of the high school auditorium school activities were scattered. Louis Morrison had a large clothing store on Sewickley Avenue across from where the honor roll stands. The street level of the building was not excavated. There were steps along the entire front of the building, about 40 feet. All eighth grade pictures were taken with the pupils standing on the steps. The early commencements, both eighth grade and high school, were held in the United Brethren Church, as were the baccalaureate services. Plays were held in the hall at Keystone. There was no hall large enough in Herminie. When the high school was established, basket ball games were held in the Keystone Hall before the auditorium was built. It was sold and torn down in 1939. Archie Mullaert's garage is located on part of this old hall's foundation.

The Republican Standard of Irwin had this comment to make in its issue of April 23, 1943: "A total of 35,195 pounds of rubber and metal scrap and tin cans were collected by the students of Sewickley Township High School in the two half day holidays given for that purpose of collecting scrap thruout the township." So the students did their part in World War II.

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Sewickley Grange along Rout3 71.

The grange and 4-H clubs were asked to submit an article but both neglected to do so.

-St EDWARD'S PARISH-



St Edward's Church in 1943

The history of St. Edward's Parish originates with the Lady of Victory parish in Madison, Pa. On January 3, 1893, Bishop Richard Phelan of Pittsburgh appointed Father James Joseph McDonnell the first pastor of Our Lady of Victory Church. The coal industry was a thriving business at that time in this area, and the people of Sewickley and surrounding townships attended the Madison parish. The first baptism was recorded on February 16, 1893 and the first Marriage on June 9, 1893. During the pastorate of Father Kelley, both the Church and Rectory were destroyed by fire on December 17, 1934.

It was during the pastorate of Father G. Paonessa of Our Lady of Victory that a mission was established in Herminie, known as St Edward's. Mass was first celebrated in the Villa building and later in the basement of the present church.

During the pastorate of Father Martin J. O'Toole the interior of the church was remodeled and the rectory was built. During Father O'Toole's pastorate Westmoreland County was made part of the new diocese of Greensburg. In July 1953 Father Albert P. Ackerman was named pastor. During his pastorate the Church was renovated on the exterior and 9 1/2 acres of ground were purchased on the Herminie-Madison Road. This is the site of the present school and convent, and some day also the future Church and Rectory.





St Edward's Church today

The parish covers today a 25 square mile area and serves the people of Herminie, Arona, Rillton, Hutchinson, Darragh, Madison, Wendel, Herminie #2, and parts of Hempfield Township. (The western part of the township which includes Lowber, Gratztown and Scott Haven attend the St Charles Roman Catholic Church, Sutersville, Pa. Some of the southern part of the township is served by the Seven Dolors Church at Yukon, Penna.)



St Edward's School and Convent were dedicated November 10, 1957. The school consists of two separate four-room units at this time, each self sustaining with connecting breezeways. Since the cluster units are self contained the classroom to classroom movement of the children is minimized.

It is easier to move one person rather than fifty. Individual entrances and exits also avoid crowding in the entrance hall in the mornings and at dismissal times.



The convent consists of a chapel, six bedrooms, three powder rooms, one complete bath, living room, dining room, all electric kitchen, full basement with integral double car garage, and numerous supply and wardrobe closets. It is 70 feet by 33 feet. In 1962 there were five Sisters of Charity and three lay teachers at the school.

Church related education is not a newcomer on the Pennsylvania educational scene. Church-related schools were Pennsylvania's first schools. The Catholic schools in Pennsylvania today trace their history back at least to 1782, when St. Mary's Parochial School was opened in Philadelphia.

Today, one out of every five school children in Pennsylvania is a Catholic school pupil. There are more than one-half million such pupils in the 1184 Catholic elementary and secondary schools in our state. These schools are all supported by the voluntary contributions of private citizens.

Why this sacrifice? Because the Catholic citizen believes that the most important thing in life is man's relationship to God, and that education should embrace the teaching of that relationship. Because he believes that his American citizenship is strengthened when it is based on religious truths and virtues. And because Catholic citizens--in a world in which freedom is in peril--see the close and vital relationship between religion and continued existence of a free and peaceable society. They express through their schools the sentiment found in the Preamble to the Constitution of Pennsylvania, and that they are "grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty----"



(The Parochial School) is a major factor in Pennsylvania education. Twenty-two percent--better than one out every five--of all school children in Pennsylvania attend Catholic schools. The Catholic schools in this state are indeed a very major part of its going and the proven educational program. Nationally, the Catholic school system is educating about 15% of all the nation's children.

What is taught? The following schedule was selected to indicate the average time allotted to each subject per week and to demonstrate the well rounded complement of courses that are offered:

-Seventh Grade-

Subject	Minutes per week
Religion	225
Mathematics	300
English Literature	180
English Composition	180
History of Pennsylvania	180
Science	75
Geography	90
Music	30
Art	40
Penmanship	60
Spelling	75
Reading-phonics	80

The pupil in the Catholic school learns essentially the same arithmetic, science, geography and other subjects which is required to be taught in public schools. He also learns religion and religious dimensions of secular knowledge. The religious content of church-related schooling is in addition to--not a subtraction from--basic state education requirements. These requirements all Catholic school meet.

The Catholic School has always stressed citizenship training and presents patriotism, loyalty and other civic virtues as moral responsibility. Typically, it has been a meeting place for children of differing ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Graduates of Catholic schools are found in all classes, occupations, and activities of American life. In times of national peril their record in the common defense of our free society has been distinctly creditable.

How is Catholic education supported? This major contribution to American education is made possible first, by the free will offerings of the Catholic laity. They support two school systems--the public and the Catholic--attendance in the schools of either constituting compliance with the compulsory school attendance law of Pennsylvania. In addition, Catholics of Pennsylvania have made a multi-million dollar investment in school buildings and equipment.

This education is provided largely out of the pay checks and saving accounts of million of Catholic citizens. It is also provided out of the very lives of a legion of other citizens--priests, nuns, brothers, and lay persons--who have dedicated themselves to teaching generation upon generation of young Americans.

By supporting their own schools, Pennsylvania Catholics are saving their fellow taxpayers \$225 million each year. This figure is based upon a report issued in April 1962 by the Department of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Over the past ten years this savings has amounted to close to two billion dollars.

(Above supplied by Father Ackerman and some is taken from a pamphlet prepared by the Pennsylvania Catholic Welfare Committee)

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After reading about the public school system in the township and the articles about Catholic education, it will be interesting to watch the experiment in "shared time" education starting this year in a nearby boro in Allegheny county. The term "shared time" is applied to a system whereby students in church supported schools take some of their courses in the parochial school and some in the public school. In this boro where the experiment is being tried, some of the nearby Catholic high school pupils will go three hours a day to this public technical high school and study science, electronics and some other courses. The remainder of the day will be in their parochial school studying English, history, religion, and so forth.

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This is a picture of the Union Baptist Church in Herminie used by the negro community. It is located at the east end of Church Street.



-T U R N P I K E-

Most of the inhabitants of Sewickley Township never knew we had a turnpike going thru our township. The name of the street up the hill in Herminie is PIKE street after this turnpike, just as Clay Pike has kept its name because it was once part of the turnpike. The name TURNPIKE as applied to a road in the early 1800's originated from the fact that a pike or pole was placed across the road at a toll house which prevented the traveler from passing until he had paid his toll. Then the pike or pole was turned around and he was permitted to pass thru. From the proceeds of these tolls the stock holders were paid dividends and the road maintained. Toll was collected about every 12 miles. No tolls were charged for any person passing from one part of his farm to another. Nor from any person attending funerals or going to and from places of worship.

In 1819 the Legislature incorporated the Mt PLEASANT TURNPIKE ROAD to build a road 'from Mt Pleasant to intersect the Greensburg-Pittsburg Turnpike at or near Larimer's Tavern (Circleville) . Apparently nothing was done because on March 31, 1823 the Legislature incorporated the Mt PLEASANT FREE ROAD COMPANY, which was amended April 10, 1828, to build a road "from McKean's (near Ruffsedale) to some where between Adamsburg and Larimer's Tavern on the Greensburg-Pittsburg Pike." On April 5, 1830 the name of the turnpike was changed to the Mt PLEASANT-PITTSBURG TURNPIKE ROAD COMPANY. On June 9, 1832 the state subscribed to \$6000 of stock of this turnpike. This connected what is now Rt 31 (Glades Road) and Route 30 (Greensburg-Pittsburg Turnpike Co.) In 1842 some of the property of the Mt Pleasant-Pittsburg Turnpike was sold by the Sheriff.

Thus the turnpike started at Circleville (then Larimer's Tavern), followed the Clay Pike and connected to the Herminie-Irwin Road and proceeded on to Madison. It went thru Madison to Waltz Mill, crossed the Big Sewickley Creek, made a left turn and onto the Glades Road (Route 31). Henry Null built most of this 13 miles of road from McKean's Old Stand, near Ruffsedale, to Circleville.

In driving cattle, hogs, sheep and etc. they paid tolls by the score (20) they were driving. Originally there was no charge for less than a score. So occassionally a drover took a herd of 19 to avoid payment of the toll.

Here are some of the toll a turnpike charged for each 10 miles:

For every :	Score of swine	6 cents
	One half score	3
	Score of sheep	6
	One Half score	3
	Score of cattle	10 cents
	Horse, or mule, loaden or unloaden,	
	led or drove	6
	Sulkey, Chair, or Chaise, with one horse	12
	with two horses	25
	with four horses	50 cents
	Other carriages or pleasure it may go to	
	like sum according to the	
	number of horses drawing same	
	Sleigh, or Sled, for each horse	6

Cart,Wagon,or other carriage of burthen  
the wheels of which do not in  
breadth exceed 4 inches,per horse 12 cents  
And when any such carriage aforesaid,the whole  
or part is drawn by oxen,two oxen  
shall be estimated as equal to one  
horse in charging aforesaid toll.



The old Toll House

The toll house for this turnpike thru the township was at the old house on the Wm Marsh property along the present Irwin-Herminie Road. Its location is shown on the map of 1867. This place where the toll house was located was called "Slab Town". There was no bridge where the road crosses the creek at this point. The road was muddy and water soaked. Slabs of wood were laid on the road to keep the road surface out of the mud. Hence the name "Slab Town". Even in the early 1900's you could tell when traveling this part of the road that wood slabs were on the road base if you were riding a wagon or carriage.

The house on the Irwin-Herminie Road on the Adolph Sereno property where Ben Douglas lives was once the stopping off place for travelers using the Mt Pleasant-Pittsburg Turnpike. Here they some times lodged over night. This building was once the Fulton post office for the Mars Hill community and Rillton. In the turnpike days the drivers carried their own bedding and bought bunk space on the floor. There were no hotels along here as we now think of places to stay over nite.

About 1854 the building of the turnpikes began to decline because the Pennsylvania Canal had hurt them and railroads were coming into the picture.

The Act of Legislature of February 24,1806 required drivers to keep to the right of the road except in overtaking another wagon. The fine for not keeping to the right was up to \$10 which was paid to the driver of the on-coming vehicle who was obstructed. Today The Vehicle Code still imposes the \$10 fine for not keeping to the right except when passing; but the state gets the fine.





In the 1880's and 90's it was a common sight to see droves of cattle being driven on this old turnpike from the stock yards in East Liberty (Pittsburgh) to the distilleries in the Connellsville, Broad Ford region. The cattle were driven there so as to be fattened on the refuse from the distilleries. This continued after the town of Herminie was being built-up. Image 200 head of cattle coming down the road thru Rillton and up Pike street on their way to Madison.

The legislature passed a special law in 1867 which permitted the township "commissioners" to divide the road system of Sewickley into distances of one mile each. Then contracts were taken for people to repair the part of the road they bid on to repair.



Coal cars at Paul Krevokucka's mine near Scott Haven.

-W A R   S E R V I C E-

Westmoreland County and Sewickley Township have always played an important part in the wars this country participated in. Even way back when General Forbes had his Expedition, William Guffey, the progenitor of the Sewickley Township Guffey's, was a member of it.

There is a notable number of graves in the Sewickley United Presbyterian Church (Brick Church) of soldiers of Revolutionary War fame. An Indian also is reputed to be buried there.

"The Westmoreland Troop cavalry, commanded by Captain Joseph Markle, fought gallantly under General Harrison, who regarded them for behaviour and military appearance as the first troop of United States Volunteer Cavalry in the Northwestern Army. It was 35 strong." One of the soldiers in the cavalry troop was James Guffey. Another local man active in the War of 1812 preparations was Captain Anthony Blackburn who was born in Sewickley Township on October 14, 1780. He raised a company of men in the last months of the War of 1812 and was commissioned a captain; but before he received his orders to take his men to the front peace was declared.

General M. Dick in 1843 became a captain of a volunteer company known as The Sewickley Artillery, which he commanded for years. In the Civil War he raised a company known as The Sewickley Infantry and was commissioned a captain on September 1, 1861. When but fourteen years of age, General Cyrus P. Markle became a member of The Sewickley Artillery and later its captain. He was a son of General Joseph Markle.

One of the G A R encampment books has this remark: "Westmoreland County has the proud distinction of during the Revolutionary War of furnishing more soldiers than all the other counties west of the Alleghenie combined. It also has the distinction of furnishing more citizens during the Civil War than the city and county of Philadelphia. Therefore, we take pride in the patriotic endeavor that has been achieved here all these many years."

Sewickley Township had many men go to the Civil War. They formed a Grand Army of the Republic (G A R) post at Cowansburg which was active for many years. In 1923 this Post No. 399 had ten living members.

The township did not do so good in the Spanish American War. It appears that only one man went to war from the township. Today there are two (Charles E. Parr and Charles E. True) Spanish American War vets living in the township; altho neither of them went from the township. But just as Braddock's defeat prepared the colonists for the Revolutionary War, the Spanish American War in 1898 taught us a valuable lesson that came in handy when World War I broke out later. We learned our shortcomings in mobilizing an army and also supplying an army on foreign soil. Our troops in Puerto Rico and the Philipines made long supply lines necessary. This was a forerunner of supplying the A E F in 1917. There are som odd things about the Spanish American War that do not apply to our other wars: None of our soldiers were captured; we won all engagements we fought; we lost no military equipment; and neither did we lose any territory to the enemy.



World War I, which was the first time a universal compulsory draft was used to get an army and a navy; resulted in many men going to war. But fortunately only two of them were killed in action: William Stares of Herminie and Edward Bobs of Scott Haven. They dedicated an Honor Roll to the dead of World War I in the Court House on May 30, 1921 when Governor Sproul spoke.

It would nearly be impossible to tell the story of the men and women of the township who played such important roles in World War II. The pictures of the many honor rolls that appear in this book tell the story much better than any words. On some of the these Honor Rills appear the names of those who went to the Korean War.

The Korean War is made mention of in this newspaper article the Republican Standard wrote on April 1952: "Tony Herbert, Herminie, who was acclaimed early in the fall as the most decorated U S Soldier in the Korean War, was again honored by his home community at a testimonial banquet. Notables present included Governor John S. Fine."

There is an oddity with all this war history. The Quakers of course were against war in any form. While they were in active charge of the cemetery at the Quaker Church, they would not permit the graves of the soldiers buried there to be decorated on Memorial Day or at any other time.

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This is the old swinging bridge across the creek below the Fair Grounds at Dick Station. It was built in 1916. Previously there was a foot log. Harry Critchfield's picture.

## -MUSIC-

The days of olde of the township always found three things: plenty of schools; many churches, and an abundance of music. Each community in the township had its own band. They played for the love of playing. Each community had a celebration on Decoration Day and the Fourth of July. And what would be a parade without music? Sometimes the bands went to other communities to play concerts.

The coal strike around here in 1910 for 18 months had its bands to keep up the morale. Herminie had two bands around that time. The one band called the "Italian" band led the marchers from Herminie to other coal mines in the area such as Claridge, Carbon, Rillton, Lowber, Export, Yukon, and so forth. When we talk of Marching Bands, here is an excerpt from the Irwin Standard of tuesday morning October 19, 1897: "Westmoreland Coal Company employees refused to listen to the harangue of a company of strikers with brass bands and marching clubs in an effort to persuade them to quit."



The "Italian" band

The boys in the front row are L to R: Peter A Vassia and Tony Cobetto.  
1st row: Pete Sartore, James Villa, Pete Caeserio, John Caeserio, Pete Longo,  
Ernest Terrone, Back row: Tony Rubino, Joe Longo, John Andreo, John Villa.  
(Mary Cignetti & Kenna Villa picture)



At times this band was preceded by three girls riding horses. The band was coming home from Carbon on May 18, 1910, the night that Halley's Comet lit up the sky. Needless to say, the tail of the comet in the sky did not give any of the marchers a glad feeling: they were scared. The bands were referred to as the marching bands because they played for the strikers as they marched from coal mine to coal mine to help boost the morale; and what else was there for the miners to do? When not leading strikers the band, and the other band, played at the Madison Hotel (Darragh), and for picnics which were frequently held in the Madison orchard.



This picture was taken in front of Bower's Store in Herminie in 1910. They were playing for a Polish funeral. Alfred Holmquist's picture. The band players from left to right: Charles Jansic, X, John Herbert, Mutz Solomon, X, John Painter.

This band, as did the other, gave concerts at the band hall in Herminie. The immigrants brought with them the love of good music and continued to enjoy it by staging operas in Italian along with costumes. Sometimes the Italians of Guffey would come and stage operas at the Band Hall, and Herminie's thespians would go to Guffey. These bands played at the drop of a hat: for funerals, weddings, christenings, and even if they were in the mood they went and serenaded women in bed because of childbirth. Both bands played for dances at the Keystone Hall and the hall on top of the old Eureka store. There was a dance in this hall the Saturday night before the building burned in 1919. The bands were disbanded before World War I. A Herminie band was revived again when The Herminie Fireman's Band was organized in 1927. This band played at firemen parades, concerts on the old bank steps, and in the theatre in Herminie. Some other members of the old 1910 band were Charles Fretz, Harry Seneff, John Morvetz.



Keystone also had band which was referred to as the "Croatian" band. One of the players was Tom Kosalec. They came to Herminie and played after the old Herminie band was disbanded. They played in hotels here. They played in Herminie in 1916, 17, etc. During World War I they would work half a day at the Keystone mine and then go play for patriotic and bond rallies. The coal company paid them for a full days work.



This is Adelamo Terrijoni's picture of The Cosmopolitan Band in Guffey in 1910. As has been said before: Guffey was a lively place to go for a good time. They did things up right, musically speaking. At one time they had two brassbands and two string bands to supply music to the two dance halls and for the operas they enacted. They loved good music.

Back about the time all these bands were being organized, Rillton decided to have a band. But the idea did not get off the ground. They practiced, and instead of "Button, button, who has the button" it turned out to be "Money, money, who took the money?"

Gratztown and Shaner had their bands to keep up the civic morale and to do their part at the celebrations and good times they had together.

Cowansburg or course was not left out of the parade of bands. But along with their regular band the music that drew the attention of the parade viewers was Cowansburg's Fife and Drum Corps. It was composed of Civil War vets. They always led the Decoration Day parades when the Civil War vets were honoring the war dead.



One of the old soldiers carrying the flag said "I fought for this and I am going to carry it." They would not ride, even when quite old.



Cowansburg's Band. Mrs Frank Freeman's picture



Shaner's Cornet band in 1908. Taken at Jacobs Creek when they went there to play. Harry Forgie's picture.



Being that we are on the subject of entertainment, television would be a good subject to discuss. The "electronic wizards" were saying that the hills of our district would never be good for television reception. An out of state electronic firm came in and erected W D T V (now K D K A-TV) in Pittsburgh. The first major telecast was President Truman's inaugural parade in 1949. People in those days had "television parties"; gathering in the few homes that had television. Then as now, people who are opposed to intoxicating liquors would either turn off their televisions, or shut the doors on the console models, when beer advertisements came on the screen. We have people now in the township who are opposed to having television sets in their homes.

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When the farmers got tired of mud roads, and filling-up the ruts with dirt, they started to quarry sandstone for the roads as it could easily be obtained. Places are yet visible where these stones had been obtained. In those days each farmer worked out most of his taxes by working on the road with his team. Later this sandstone was rolled by a steam roller to make it more compact.

With the coming of the mines, ashes from the boilers were pentiful and ash roads were made. The wagons drawn by horses, had bottoms made of plank two inches thick and about 6 inches wide. These planks protruded beyond the rear of the wagon body so they could be lifted to permit the ashes to drop down on the road. Then dump wagons were made where the bottom was on hinges and left the load fall onto the road.

The refuse from inside the mines was sent outside of the mine to be deposited on some useless land. Always a small amount of coal would be mixed (not on purpose) with the slate. The heat produced by spontaneous combustion would start the coal and the slate to burn. This resulted in the slate dumps which burnt with a terrible sulphur odor noticeable during the day while brilliant colors gave an enchanting light at night. The loading of this slate into mine cars was done gratis by the miners. Some days all the miner got done was cleaning-up his place so he could load coal the next day. This burning slate produced "red dog" used on the roads then and now.

The coming of the auto demanded better roads. Motorists got tired of putting on chains to travel muddy roads or to get out of mud holes sometimes deliberately placed by some farmers so they could get a fee for pulling the auto out of the mud. There were madadam roads made of stone and covered with asphalt before the time of Governor Pinchot. But Governor Pinchot was elected twice as governor on the slogan "get the farmer out of the mud." He built so much improved roads of stone and tar that these roads are now referred to as "Pinchot roads."

History has made a round in music. When Louis Averback built his store in 1916 on Sewickley Avenue (post office located there now) he had built in a corner a music room. Sheet music and records were things of the day. This room had double glass for the upper walls and double glass in the door. This was done to make the room as sound proof as possible for the customers in the room not to be troubled with noises from without; and for those without not to be disturbed by the music being played in the room. People went into this room to play music which they were interested in buying. Victorolas and phonographs were the popular thing of the day. Just as after other wars, people had money to spend and they went for records and pianos. Radio was not born yet. After war spending caused the buying of televisions after World War II.



Advancements in electronics in World War II made possible television for the home. Now today we have made our round: records, Hi-Fi and Stereo are back with us again; good music thru records.

Today the giving of stamps with purchases is all the rage. Yet in 1915 Walker's, who had a store on the corner of 8th street where Rahne's live, gave out green stamps. Today Bissin's Market and Rouse's Pharmacy give out S & H (green) stamps; Eureka Store and Kavel's Pharmacy give out Top Value (TV) stamps; and the A & P gives out Plaid Stamps. It appears that some women are more interested in getting stamps than in the price of the article.

In the days before the 1920's it was a common sight to see people sitting and rocking in their rocking chairs. Old women smoking their clay pipes and rocking away the time. Many children were rocked to sleep in the old rocking chair. Then the new homes came along and had no room for them. People did not stay home much--they were on the go with their autos. Now being that President Kennedy is a lover and user of rocking chairs, they are again being advertised and bought, particularly by the "upper class." It is now fashionable.

Today the radio is doing much advertising about using snuff. But back in the 90's, and before, it was much used by adult women. Mrs Mildred Vanatt says that "at that time the women wore a skirt and many petticoats. Underneath the skirt was a petticoat with pockets in it. The women would raise their skirt, put their hand in the pocket and get their snuff. They either snuffed or "chewed" it. No one thought much about the fad. Some of the other women had their clay pipes which they smoked while passing the time away on their rockers." Two McGrew sisters lived outside Guffey. Some of the women would caution their young daughters not to go near them, "They use snuff."

You have read about how Guffey, Shaner and that vicinity had their day and ceased to be. It is hoped that the opening of the new Legislative Route 64226 this year from Mars Hill Church to the top of Sutersville hill will provide the boon to have a rebirth in this section just as Alternate Route 71 did for the Waltz Mill section.

Did you ever heard about the two men who made everything stop when they took to the air waves? When ever Amos and Andy were at the height of their popularity in the late 20's, everything practically stopped while the radio brought forth their dialogue. Theatre managers arranged the time for intermission for pictures to coincide with their program. The theatres (most of them) then would broadcast thru speakers the Amos and Andy program for their theatre audience. Then the show would go on. There were no talking pictures then.

## -SHOPPING IN THE DAYS OF OLD -

The grocery store of yesterday is likened to the shopping centers of today: everything under one roof. They carried large and complete stocks of dry goods, groceries, tobacco, notions, hardware, miner's supplies such as picks, shovels and carbide for their lamps, augers, kerosene for home lighting, confectioneries, and tinware. As late as 1931 N. Brock and Son were advertising: Fine groceries, Fresh fruit, oils, brushes, miner's supplies, aluminum, tin, glass, and wooden ware."



Frank Vassia's old store. L to R. Mrs Vassia, Keena, Mary, Mr Monstrola, and Diane Vassia. Mary Cignetti's and Kenna Villa's picture

Customers were enticed into the store by the owner displaying his wares in front of his store on the sidewalk. The sidewalks were crowded with brooms, hardware, tools dresses, overalls, shoes, boots, etc. Every morning these were carried out only to be taken back into the store at night. Bananas hung from stocks from the porch ceiling. The stores were built with porches in front for this display purpose. Bushels of eggs greeted the customer wanting eggs. If you did not want to grind your coffee at home, the grocer had a large grinder for you to grind it at the store. The lard came in firkins and butter came in wooden tubs. These were put in small wooden things resembling boats. The children used these wooden scoops for boats.

Vinegar came in barrels and you took your own container when you went to buy. You bought kerosene for your lamps out of a barell by taking your own gallon or five gallon metal can which was purchased for that purpose. You could see the big 52 gallon barrel on the floor with pickles swimming in it.



Packaged goods were unheard of. The grocer had to package his own if he wanted it packaged. Under the counters the store keepers had bins for rice, tea, coffee, beans, and other loose articles. He sold you what you wanted by weighing it for you when you came to the store. Dried fish were hung up, generally on the outside of the store. Some kinds of fish came in small wooden buckets. Crackers and cakes came in cardboard boxes, generally 5 pound to a box. One of the favorite sellers was jelly beans. These could be seen setting around the store in large paper cartons and some times in barrels. Tomatoes, corn, fresh vegetables, etc. were sold when in season locally and were purchased from local farmers; as were apples and pears. As almost everyone had a garden, very little garden products were sold. And then the neighbors were always kind enough to share their excess garden products with you. Most of the women canned enough tomatoes, corn, beans, and other vegetables; along with peaches, pears, apples, and other fruits to last from one season to the next. Women were as proud of their canning as women today are of their bingo wins. The glass jars were used year after year, only new rubber rings being needed. Celery was seen mostly at Christmas time. Package goods, as we know it, came mostly in vogue after World War II and growth of the self service markets.

When railroads started to haul foodstuffs, crackers were shipped in barrels. Up to about 60 years ago, everything was prepared locally or within a short distance where it could be transported by wagons. Flour, sugar and etc. were also shipped in barrels. Hence today we have the expression "cracker barrel" because every store had its barrel of crackers from which customers were served; and around which the town "historians" gathered to discuss the affairs of the day. When UNEEDA biscuits started to wrap their crackers in wax paper, around 1900, the whole food industry slowly started packaging their products. This fundamental change in food merchandising made possible today's supermarket. The common use of plastics in World War II was a great impetus in packaging with it after the war. Now you could see what you were buying.

One thing the children looked forward to was "payday" when father went to the store to pay the grocery bill. Not that you would get more than a penny or maybe a nickel; but the children went along because they knew the store keeper was sure to give them a bag of candy when the bill was paid.

The itinerant peddler made his rounds from house to house on a schedule, once a month generally. This was a common sight until the late 1920's. He carried with him dry goods, some ready made clothes, novelties and notions. When we speak of dry goods we are talking about materials that could be made into something, like cloth for pants, materials for dresses, drapes, etc.

The umbrella man made his rounds. With the absence of autos, walking was popular and umbrellas a necessity. He repaired your broken umbrellas and carried with him a contraption which was operated by foot power and used to sharpen your knives. Remember nothing came wrapped in cellophane; you had to cut your own meat and slice your own bread.

When we are talking about the old days and the early 20's, we are apt to forget that at that time meat wagons went from house to house and sold meat from the wagon. Each butcher had his slaughterhouse because he had to butcher frequently due to lack of refrigeration. There was no refrigeration in the wagons. The meat hung up on the inside of the covered wagon walls and from the ceiling. The butcher cut for you the meat you wanted and weighed it on scales which hung at the rear of the wagon. If you wanted ground meat, you ground it.





Anton Zornick's store in the early 1920. Leo Zornick's picture.  
L to R: Mrs Zornick, Mr Zornick, Rudolph and Leo.

There was no gas or electric refrigeration as we now have in our homes and stores. The butchers had their ice ponds where ice was cut in the winter and packed with sawdust to supply ice for the summer months. Those who had refrigerators in their homes were brought ice once or twice a week by the ice man. He made his regular rounds and you bought 15¢, 25¢ or 50¢ according to the size of your ice box and your need for ice. Stores, for refrigeration, had large walk-in coolers with ice compartments on top. This was filled with blocks of ice, earlier from the ice ponds and later from commercial ice plants. The ice man was a familiar figure and the but of many jokes until the late 20's when electric refrigeration for homes started to become popular.

If you wanted buttermilk you took your pail and the farmer gladly filled it for you from his supply in the spring house. He only fed it to the pigs. All the farmers made their own butter. Milk was not shipped on the large scale as today. The farmer had his route to peddle butter and eggs. There being no refrigeration, each farm had a spring house built over a spring or brook where running water kept the place cool. Some farmers had daily milk routes where they had the 5 gallon cans of milk in the wagon and dipped for you the amount you wanted in your container. This continued until the late 20's.

One of the strange things of these 20's in Herminie was the conduct of a man who had a men's clothing store. When ever two people were in the store, he would lock the door and not permit any one to enter until some one had gone.



Up to the time of the depression, or in the mid thirties, it was fashionable to have better grade shirts with collars which were detachable. If the collar became soiled, all you had to do was remove the collar and wash it separately. Laundries were few and far between. The Chinese then had a monopoly on this business and it was hand operated. The collar was attached to the shirt neckband by an elusive front and a rear buttons. It was a common joke about getting down on your knees to look for one of these buttons under the dresser or other bedroom furniture. The separate collars were made of leather, rubber, celluloid, and paper. Mostly they were of celluloid. There were different styles in stiff and soft collars. They seemed to be at their peak in 1924 and then started to decline until today they are no longer made.

Can you imagine a Model T Ford without a self starter selling for only \$290 in 1924 and no sales tax or no installment buying. Every car was sold cash on the line. This Ford was a roadster type car. In 1933 the prices of the cheapest Ford was \$410; while the Chevrolet was selling for \$485 and the Plymouth for \$495.

In the olden days each customer was a particular individual. The owner or his clerk knew you and all about your family. If misfortune should strike you, they were willing to help or extend credit if needed until better days. Today everything is going supermarket. The customer is approaching the status of packaged goods: just another thing passing thru the store.

Thirty years ago there was no Public Assistance (except the Poor House); no Unemployment Compensation, no Social Security, no Mothers' Assistance. When these ideas were introduced in the legislature and congress by the Democrats, they were branded "communistic and socialistic" by some people in high places. In the old days your friendly corner grocery man was all these agencies wrapped up in one. When you had no work, or very little work, he was the only one you could turn to for help. The company stores in the mining towns are always quoted as having high prices. Necessity of the times was partly responsible for this. With the mines working only part time (while you and your family ate full time) the high percentage of unpaid bills made the prices high to overcome the bills not paid. Of course, having a "captive" set of customers, some stores were bound to take advantage of its people. Now with the gradually decreasing of credit in the grocery stores, people are getting lower prices because they have money from working or from the government agencies to pay. Less credit and lower prices in all stores.

The Pittsburgh Press of August 19, 1962 had this to say about the latest in supermarketing: "The latest supermarket item is bottled eggs. They come 10 to 20 to a bottle, can be poured out, one at a time, with yolks unbroken, costs about 10 cents more than ordinary eggs."

## JOHN J. WILSON



## JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Please do not "shoot" the printer if you find typographical errors. He only reproduced the pages as they were supplied to him already typed by me.

There is so much to be told about our township today, that I only hope and pray the people will respond with enough good material so it can all be put into print for the people who come after us.

Tomorrow only knows as much about today as we tell them. Had the older people not kept records, pictures, scrapbooks, etc., this work would not be as complete as it is. To us falls the duty of seeing that the people of tomorrow gets a good view of the Sewickley Township of today. So please start thinking about what you would like to see given to posterity. If a project of SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP TODAY goes thru, you will then be prepared to do your part for the people of the future.

I want to thank each of you for the part you have played. It has been a long, thankless task; even fraught with jealousy. But a start has been made upon which further works of this kind can be built.

The different organizations and lodges in the township were sent letters asking them to submit an article about their association. You will notice that few responded. If the association you are interested in is not in this book it is because its peoples did not send in the information needed.

In reading this history one must remember that many people between the ages of 75 years and 90 years were interviewed. The information these people acquired thru the years from their fathers and grandfathers, along with family bible records and other data, more than cover the span of years which the township was in existence.









